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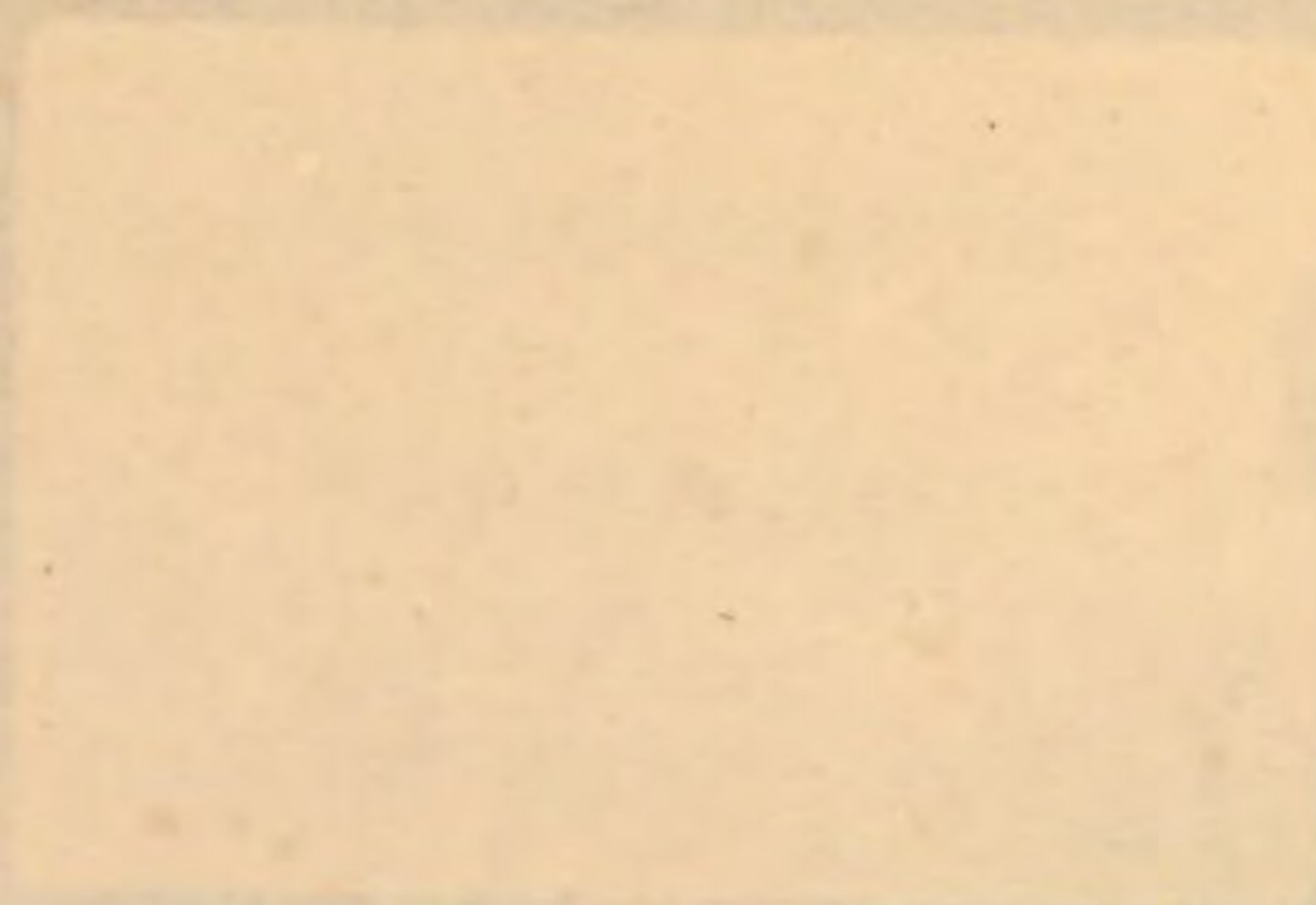
HISTORY OF PARTY.

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HISTORY OF PARTY.

THE FIRM AND FREE PRINCIPLES

IN THE MINDS OF INDIVIDUALS

THE PASSAGE OF THE

HISTORY OF PARTY.

GEORGE WINGROVE LING, Esq.

ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF ENGLAND."

VOL. II.

1841.

LONDON:

AND WATSON, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

1841.

HISTORY OF PARTY.

THE
HISTORY OF PARTY;

FROM THE RISE OF
THE WHIG AND TORY FACTIONS,
IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.,
TO
THE PASSING OF THE REFORM BILL.

BY
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VOL. II.

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JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.
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THE
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FROM THE RISE OF
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IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

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THE
HISTORY OF PARTY.

CHAPTER I.

Relative strength of the Whig and Tory factions at the accession of George the First—Leaders of the Whigs—Townshend—General Stanhope—William Pulteney—Leaders of the Tories—Sir William Wyndham—Character of George the First.

THE year 1714 witnessed a revolution unparalleled in the annals of nations. The hereditary sceptre of a great and powerful empire passed from the hands of the ancient dynasty, without one act of violence or one word of opposition. The new dynasty, to which the mere declaration of the people had transferred it, succeeded as quietly as if they had been the immediate descendants of a long line of British kings.

This event was caused by the active zeal and suddenly exerted energy of one of the great factions, and by the fear, the surprise, and the disunion of the other.

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Of these factions the Tories were at that time, although broken and inactive, the most numerous throughout the nation. A very large majority of the agricultural portion of the population has always adhered to this party. The landholders saw, in the power which they themselves exercised over their tenantry, a miniature representation of Tory government. The feudal feeling, which expired without leaving a trace of existence among the inhabitants of towns, was little more than modified among the cultivators of the fields. The descendant of the feudal lord succeeded to his possessions, and almost to his power; his tenantry derived from their fathers an hereditary loyalty to his house, they claimed an interest in the honour of its representative. This was an instance of that patriarchal state which, under favouring circumstances, the Tories have delighted to eulogize; it is not surprising that the possessor of such influence should look with horror upon principles calculated to disturb it, should declare war against a system which promised, eventually, to make those who were then, upon all political subjects, the mere doers of his will, reasoning men and independent agents.

There were few of this class of men who were numbered among the Whigs, but these exceptions were generally found among those who were most eminent for wealth and intellect. Those whose possessions were

of sufficient extent to give them importance in the higher house of legislature could, as they mingled in the world, correct the prejudices imbibed during their childhood. It required, however, honesty as well as intelligence to disavow errors which gave them power.

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Hence we may perhaps draw the reason, that the smaller landholder was universally a Tory; the clergyman whom he patronized was a Tory by education, almost by profession, since, the smaller benefices being generally in the hands of the second-rate landowners, the inferior clergy were compelled to adopt the politics of the patron to whom they looked for preferment; the tenantry were Tories because they were habituated to the influence of the landlord, and were accustomed to receive, as incontrovertible truths, the political sermons of the rector; they were Tories, also, because they were sunk in ignorance and knew no other creed, because not one in ten of them could read, and those few who possessed this rare acquirement never thought of exercising it upon the subject of politics. Political pamphlets never penetrated to the remote dwellings of the agriculturalist; their sphere of circulation was confined to cities.

While the villages and smaller towns were monopolized by Tories, the larger cities, the manufacturing districts, and the ports of commerce, formed the strongholds of the Whigs. Here there existed

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no shadow of that hereditary connexion between landlord and tenant, so powerful in the country; here the usual pursuits of handicraft or commerce required some rudiments of education, or at least some mental exertion. The facilities for acquiring the first elements of knowledge were incalculably greater; no guide was present, upon whom the mind was accustomed indolently to lean, and from whom it was thought heretical, nay atheistical, to dissent. The press was at work, it produced nothing but controversy; society was more general, the clash of opinions was more frequent. Here, where all were contending, every man must think for himself, and a mind once accustomed to independence would naturally prefer a system essentially progressive, whose action was bounded only by the confines of a rational moderation, to one which was fettered by precedents and enclosed within dogmas.

The Tories of the manufacturing and populous districts were usually those whom some connexion with a Tory government, or some family influence had directed in the choice of a party, or those who, having acquired great wealth, thought only of its preservation, and dreaded the slightest departure from ancient rule as subversive of the rights of property.

The class which formed the strength of the Whig party had greatly increased in consequence and re-

sources since the expulsion of James. The wars by which England had wiped away the accumulated degradation she had suffered from France had given an impetus to commerce, and had called into being a new class of persons, whose interest was distinct from that of the landholder. The ministers of William and Anne had mortgaged the land and the industry of the kingdom for the supply of its immediate exigencies. That powerful body, which soon became known as the moneyed interest, was the immediate offspring of the expedient, and increased in influence as the debt became augmented. The merchants, who gained by the vast expenditure of these years, commonly became the holders of the national mortgages, and gradually began to rival in wealth and influence those who drew their income and honours from the possession of land. This circumstance greatly increased the power of the Whig party.

The French envoy, D'Iberville, professing to render an account to his court of the state of parties in England during this year, describes the Whigs as a thoroughly united party, boasting the best purses, the best swords, the most able heads, and the handsomest women. This party also he describes as the more rich in money and paper, the Tories in land. He mentions as the leading Whigs Halifax, Somers, once the leader of the faction, but then become nearly imbecile from the decay of his faculties, Warton,

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Sunderland, Nottingham, Oxford, Bradfort, Chesterfield, but above all, Walpole.*

Among these names we find several not properly belonging to the Whigs; Oxford, if the name is not written by mistake for Orford, notwithstanding his recent intrigues, certainly had no right to rank himself as of that party; and Nottingham, although he had deserted his former friends, and was now become the chief object of their abuse, was, although a respectable, but an unsteady convert. There were other names, however, omitted in this catalogue, which had now become illustrious in the eyes of their party. The first in rank and importance among these new leaders was Charles, Viscount Townshend, the representative of a Tory family, and the son of a man who had been raised to the peerage for his devotion to Charles the Second. When, in 1696, Lord Townshend took his seat in the house of peers, he embarked all his youthful zeal in the cause of his family, and his name appears attached to several of the violent protests of the Tory minority. It would be useless to inquire the immediate reason of the sudden change in the political convictions of the young nobleman; but we soon after find him among the disciples of Somers, cordially co-operating with the Whigs, and contented with a subordinate station among his newly

* Mackintosh MSS.

adopted party. His services were not overlooked by the Godolphin administration; he was named one of the commissioners for arranging the union with Scotland, and he was rewarded for his exertions in this station with the captaincy of the yeomen of the Queen's guard. Gradually he was placed in more conspicuous posts; he was joint plenipotentiary with Marlborough, at Gertruydenberg, and he negotiated with the States-general the barrier treaty. Hitherto his youth had kept him, in the estimation of his party, in the rank of a follower; the persecution of the Tories raised him to the station of a leader. When, upon the formation of the Harley ministry, Townshend was dismissed from his places, censured by a vote of the Tory house of commons, and marked out to be associated with Marlborough in the prosecution then threatened, he was immediately exalted in the eyes of his own party, and he obtained an influence which he was careful to cultivate.

Townshend maintained a close correspondence with the court of Hanover; he had the chief direction of the practices by which Robethon and Bothmar, the former the secretary, the latter the agent in England, of the Elector, were gained to the Whigs, and he succeeded in obtaining the entire confidence of the prince who was so soon to become his sovereign.

Another Whig, now risen into importance in the estimation of his party, was James Stanhope, a man

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who, in his after career, was more successful than popular, and whose station was more conspicuous than the means by which he attained to it were honourable. Stanhope was descended by a younger branch from the Earls of Chesterfield, and his early ambition was to distinguish himself rather in the field than in the council. While yet a youth, he left Oxford to accompany his father to Spain, and, passing thence into Italy, commenced his military education as a volunteer in the service of the Duke of Savoy. As a soldier of fortune, ever ready to turn his sword in any cause against France, his courage and conduct procured for him considerable reputation. When in 1694 he presented himself to King William in Flanders, that monarch made him a captain in his regiment of foot-guards, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. In the following year he was severely wounded at the siege of Namur, and his name being now known in England, he was elected by the borough of Newport a member of William's last parliament. Stanhope does not appear, however, to have deserted his chosen profession for the duties of his new trust; his name never occurs in the parliamentary debates of that time, but it is prominent in most of the accounts of military enterprise. In 1702, he fought under the Duke of Ormond at Cadiz; the following year he was engaged, under Charles the Third of Spain, in Portugal; and in the next he distinguished himself

at the siege of Barcelona. His rise in the British service was rapid; he was made a brigadier-general in 1704, sent as envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Charles the Third in 1706, made major-general in 1707, and declared commander-in-chief of the British forces in Spain in 1708. In this capacity he performed his most celebrated exploit, the reduction of Port Mahon. During the continuance of his commission he fought and gained the battle of Almenara, and temporarily seated Charles at Madrid. That, notwithstanding this frequent appearance in active service, Stanhope contrived to obtain some influence in the house of commons, is apparent from the occurrence of his name in the list of the twenty managers of the impeachment against Sacheverell.* He had previously taken, as appears from his letters to Robert Walpole,† great interest in the proceedings of the house, and he had been a strenuous supporter of the Whigs; but his appointment to this prominent post is doubtless to be attributed to his great intimacy with Walpole and Townshend, with whom he was in constant familiar correspondence. One of the earliest appointments of Horace Walpole was that of private secretary to General Stanhope during his embassy in Spain. It was certainly the patronage of Townshend and Walpole which had

* Parl. Hist. vi. 825.

11, p. 4. This letter was written in

† Coxe's Life of Walpole, Ap. 1703.

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raised General Stanhope to the rank of a parliamentary leader, rather than any talent for debate which he had yet evinced.

Another distinguished man among the Whigs, far superior to this last in talent, was William Pulteney—a name illustrious in the annals of his party; but, like that of the great majority of statesmen in every age, not altogether unsullied. Pulteney was the representative of an ancient English family, the members of which had been members of the Whig party ever since it had grown into being. His grandfather, representing the city of Westminster, had obtained a considerable reputation for eloquence and zeal; the grandson, in emulating his example, far surpassed his success. While yet at Oxford, he had so favourably distinguished himself, that he was selected by Dean Aldrich to deliver the congratulatory speech to Queen Anne upon her visit to Christ Church. After leaving the university, he passed the usual period in travel, and returned to England with abilities of a high order, cultivated by observation and study.

Mr. Henry Guy, who had been secretary to the treasury, was Pulteney's guardian, and had been an intimate friend of his grandfather. By this gentleman's influence, the young aspirant for public honours was returned to parliament for the borough of Heydon, in Yorkshire; and he afterwards received a still greater proof of his guardian's affection, since, upon

his death, he became possessed by his will of a legacy of £40,000, and an estate of £500 a-year.*

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Pulteney's conduct in the house was cautious ; he made no attempt to dazzle by a brilliant and well-learned speech delivered upon some important debate : for it was his maxim, that there were few real orators who commenced with set speeches. He applied himself to the study of the practice and the temper of the house, and exercised himself cautiously and concisely upon unimportant topics. It was only gradually, therefore, that Pulteney's powers of oratory became developed ; the house had been occasionally startled by the bitterness of a passing sarcasm,† or impressed with the justice of a single remark ; but it was not until the latter end of the reign of Queen Anne that he began to compete in excellence with the first orators among the commons. He is then said to have centred the chief advantages which can give effect to the harangue of a speaker. "He was," says the fastidious Chesterfield,‡ "the most complete orator and debater in the house of commons—elo-

* Coxe's Life of Walpole. In a tract called *Memoirs of the Life* p. 11.

and Conduct of William Pulteney, Esq., which appears to have formed the basis of Mr. Coxe's sketch ; this person is called Sir John Guise, Bart., and the bequest is stated to have been "an estate worth thou-

sands of pounds per annum."—

† "Cerberus has received his

sop and barks no more," was the contemptuous phrase in which he alluded to Montague's desertion upon the Place bill.—*Coxe*, 354.

‡ Chesterfield's Characters.

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quent, entertaining, persuasive, strong, and pathetic, as occasion required ; for he had arguments, wit, and even tears at his command." Pulteney possessed great fluency of speech, flexibility of voice, and grace in delivery ; his arguments were well chosen and forcibly presented ; according to the hyperbolical description of his biographer, "it is impossible for the thought of man to conceive with what dexterity he unravelled such points as seemed most arduous, and detected the false gloss that was put upon them to conceal their imperfections."* By the testimony of his contemporaries, he appears to have united the most opposite advantages ; so clear was his apprehension, that he could readily simplify the most involved accounts, making their purport plain even to the distracted attention of a large assembly ; so lively was his fancy, and so brilliant his declamation that, upon a more general subject, he compelled the house to admire and follow him ; so perfect was his knowledge of the classics, that delicate allusions and apt quotations were always at his command, to shed their light over even the most unpromising subjects ; and so exquisite was his art, that he always persuaded those those who heard him, that he felt every sentiment which he uttered.†

* Memoirs of William Pulteney, Esq.

† Chesterfield's Characters.—
Chesterfield's Characters Reviewed, p. 29.

Such was the eloquence which this great man displayed, when at the height of his reputation and in the full blaze of his popularity. We are told, however, that this power of speech was the growth of time and practice, and, doubtless, although Pulteney had vindicated the principles of the revolution at the time of the impeachment of Sacheverell—had defended Walpole, when expelled the house of commons, and had battled, during years of Tory supremacy, by the side of the Whigs, it was only recently that he had acquired the reputation and influence of a leader.

In character, Pulteney was passionate and impetuous, but supported by great personal courage; greatly addicted to social and convivial pleasures, but it is said, enslaved by avarice—a vice, of all others, the most incompatible with this disposition. Many instances of his peculiarity, in this respect, are mentioned. Pulteney affected great splendour in his entertainments. It is said, that he once borrowed of the Duke of Newcastle M. Cloe, at that time, the most celebrated cook in England, to superintend a dinner. Cloe attended; but finding that the master of the house directed all the arrangements with a view to economy, and continually curtailed all his plans, he grew at last so enraged, that he threw up his task, and left the house in a passion.* No man

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* Characters Reviewed.

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was more punctual in paying his tradesmen; but it is said that it was, when Earl of Bath, his custom to amass a great quantity of Portuguese coin of all sorts, from pieces of the value of 4s. 6d. to those of 3l. 12s.; all which he was extremely expert in reckoning. The tradesman who received them was expected to be as quick in counting them as himself, and if he was not, he was told to despatch or call again. Many of course received their money, and took it away uncounted; but none ever did so without afterwards discovering that there was a very considerable miscalculation, which was always in favour of the payer. These instances of parsimonious habits, if true, must rather be looked upon as eccentricities, than as proofs of a dominant and continual avarice: but such anecdotes are usually useful, rather to show what contemporaries thought probable to have occurred, than to tell us what did occur. They derive their consequence rather from their currency than their truth. If Pulteney's avarice tempted him in earlier life to be niggardly in his hospitality, and in his old age to put a dotard's cheat upon his tradesmen, it does not therefore follow that he was through life a miser. On the contrary, we learn that, when a young man, he subscribed liberally to a very unprofitable loan, made by the Whig party, to the emperor during the negotiations at Utrecht. Even Chesterfield, who has deepened every shadow in his character, allows

that he affected good nature and compassion, and admits that, perhaps, he might feel the sorrows and distresses of his fellow-creatures ; when he adds, “his hand was seldom or never stretched out to relieve them,” he is directly contradicted by Dr. Zachary Pearce, bishop of Rochester, who averred, of his own knowledge, that Pulteney bestowed the tenth part of his income in charitable uses.”*

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Such was William Pulteney, who, at the accession of George I. was looked upon as one of the great leaders of the Whigs.

Among the Tories, in addition to those who were so recently conspicuous as ministerial leaders, was Sir William Wyndham, whose wealth and influence had already been rewarded with important posts in the Tory ministry, but whose youth had hitherto restrained him from assuming any prominent character in debate. Wyndham was descended from a very ancient family, and born heir to one of the richest baronetcies in England. His father dying when he was very young, his inheritance naturally accumulated during a long minority. He was educated at Eton, and gave early promise of those talents by which he was afterwards so distinguished ; he entered the world at an early age, and had no sooner attained

* This declaration is quoted in some one of the bishop's numerous Chesterfield's Characters Review-published sermons.
ed, and may doubtless be found in

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his majority than he was elected to the house of commons.

The young senator immediately attached himself to the Tory party, Bolingbroke was his political guide and private friend, and under his able instruction he became soon expert in all the arts of oratory and all the practices of debauchery. The proficiency which he acquired by this friendship appears to have extended to all the minute details by which influence is obtained and preserved in an assembly constituted like our house of commons. Although so young and inexperienced, Wyndham, at the accession of George I., stood forward as the undisputed leader of his party in that assembly, and his patriotism, his eloquence, and his self-possession have found an eulogist in one who, by achieving fame himself, had acquired the power of conferring it on others.*

How far we can coincide in the praise of Wyndham's patriotism is very questionable; for, although we have already seen him declaring that the pretender was "an impracticable man, and would never be brought in," we shall presently have occasion to view him actively engaged in the intrigues which were so restlessly pursued for restoring the exiled dynasty. The man who could think of cursing his

* "Wyndham just to freedom and the throne,
The master of our passions and his own."—*Pope*.

country with another Stuart king, could never be really a patriot.

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When twenty-eight years old, Sir William is described to have been a middle-sized fair man, very handsome, and extremely good-humoured; the possessor of an ample fortune, and generous in its expenditure; frank, courageous, and resolved; a man of strict honour, a generous and faithful friend, kind and affectionate in his domestic relations, and although professing himself a man of pleasure, rather affecting the reputation than practising the excesses of a libertine.*

Lords Bolingbroke, Bingley, and Harcourt, the Duke of Ormond, Sir Thomas Hanmer, and Mr. Bromley may be enumerated as the other most prominent persons among the Tories.

The sovereign who was called by the election of the nation to act as moderator between these hostile factions, and to curb the violence of these able men, was utterly destitute of ability for the task he had undertaken. We must always keep in mind the invaluable principle which triumphed in the succession of the House of Hanover, if we wish to view with complacency the reign of the first king of England of that house. George the First had passed his life in the rule of a petty principality,

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. liv., p. 589.

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his ideas of government had radiated as far as the frontiers of his electorate, and had been stopped by its confines; habit had formed them to their sphere, and even when transplanted into a nobler field, they refused to germinate. George upon the throne of England was still only the Elector of Hanover; he was ignorant of the language, he hated the habits, he was even impatient of the acclamations of his new subjects. Lazy and inactive, and therefore lowly sensual, even in his pleasures, the ordinary duties of his station were to him intolerably wearisome; his disregard of splendour, and his utter ignorance of ambition, took from these onerous duties their corresponding rewards; what wonder, therefore, that he thought little of the honour or advantage of a nation he did not understand, and in questions of foreign policy looked only to the interests of his own electorate?

This partiality to his native country cannot be objected personally against this prince, it was the price which the nation paid upon changing the family of its kings. At the age of fifty-four, George had the formed habits of a German; it was England's misfortune, not his fault, that he did not possess or seek any knowledge of our history, our laws, or our constitution.

In his private character, although jealous and resentful, this prince was not without benevolence, and,

although dull and phlegmatic, he was not destitute of
 ordinary ability, nor, when among those whose com-
 pany he chiefly affected, even of pleasantry. A rare
 instance is recorded of a happy and ready repartee—
 too curious an achievement for George I. to be
 omitted:—At the time of the Scotch rebellion, Bishop
 Atterbury, so celebrated as a Jacobite, a scholar, and,
 as his contemporaries judged, a deist, was detailing
 to the king, with many expressions of affected sorrow,
 the progress the rebels had made. “My Lord
 Bishop,” interrupted the king, “I fear the rebels as
 little as you do Jesus Christ.”

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The disadvantageous parts of the king's character
 were already well known to the nation, as they had
 been carefully sketched and artfully heightened by
 the emissaries of the Stuarts; they were also the
 most prominent and obvious features: his simplicity,
 economy, and love of peace, required time to be de-
 veloped and appreciated.*

* Coxe. Chesterfield. “Chesterfield's Characters Reviewed.”

CHAPTER II.

Expectations of the two parties—Appointment of Lord Townshend as secretary of state—Formation of a Whig ministry—Elections favourable to the Whigs—Meeting of parliament—Inquiry into the conduct of the late ministry—Impeachment of Bolingbroke, Oxford, Ormond, and Strafford.

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QUEEN Anne died on the 1st of August, and, at the privy council which was immediately held, instruments were produced under the seal of the Elector of Brunswick, nominating lords justices of the kingdom, until he could arrive to assume the reins of government. The measures of these lords justices immediately discovered that their power was wielded by the Whig party. The most rigorous measures were taken to anticipate and crush any attempt of the Jacobites; Addison was chosen their secretary; the functions of the ministers of state were, in effect, suspended; and Bolingbroke, the chief of the party which, in the preceding week, seemed rooted in its power, now stood at the door of the council-chamber, exposed to the taunts and insults of the lowest retainers of the successful faction.

Both parties, nevertheless, looked with great interest towards Hanover, each having secret hopes of favour from the new sovereign. The Whigs, conscious of the magnitude of their services, and possessed of the influence of Bernsdorf, the principal minister of Hanover, Robethon, the private secretary, of the elector, and Bothmar, the Hanoverian agent in England, were confident of preserving their ascendancy; but the Tories were not without hopes of an equal share of power, although they could not hope for the monopoly which the return of the Stuarts promised. The Earl of Clarendon, who had recently arrived as envoy-extraordinary at the court of Hanover, was entirely in their interest; and George and his ministers had conducted themselves so prudently towards him, that he wrote home the most flattering accounts to his party. Goerty, an influential minister at Hanover, was devoted to their interest,* and the king himself, while the succession was yet insecure, sedulously avoided giving them any alarm.

With these hopes, the Tories pretended extraordinary loyalty to the king, whom they wanted only power to declare a public enemy. In the parliament which immediately met, they bid largely for his favour. The Whigs proposed to continue the revenue which had been enjoyed by the late queen, but

* Letter from Horace Walpole to the Rev. Henry Etough. Coxe, App., vol. ii., p. 47.

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the Tories urged its augmentation to £1,000,000; the Whigs, however, had the courage to interpose, and defeated the artifice. This temper in the Tories did not long continue; no sooner had the king arrived so far on his way as the Hague than their fall became manifest. A despatch arrived, removing Lord Bolingbroke from his post of secretary. The circumstances of the dismissal of this champion of his party presaged a coming persecution. Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Cowper, were deputed by the lords justices to receive the seals, and to secure his papers, and it was apparent that this latter precaution was taken with a view to future inquiry. The communication of the contents of this despatch and its enforcement were nearly immediate, but it is said that Bolingbroke yet found time for the removal of a certain box, in which alone any dangerous correspondence was preserved, and that this was conveyed away just previous to the arrival of the lords justices.* The means of information possessed by the author of this statement doubtless give it great authority; if true, it completely accounts for the unconcern which Bolingbroke after-

* D'Iberville au Roi, 24 Jan. 49. Dr. King, among his anecdotes, states that Bolingbroke's secretary removed certain papers, but Bolingbroke sent them back. This is by no means inconsistent with D'Iberville's information.
1715. Mackintosh MSS. Stanhope, in the house of commons, publicly stated that papers had been conveyed away from the secretary's office, in order to prevent discoveries. Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p.

wards manifested with respect to the papers of his office, and for the failure of the Whigs, to obtain from them evidence of transactions which they were certain had taken place.

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On the 18th September the king arrived at Greenwich, and the Tories flocked around him, anxious to know their fate. Immediately upon his arrival, George sent for those of the council of regency whom he esteemed his friends, and conversed with them in private; but it was noticed that none of the late queen's ministers were included in the invitation. Oxford had boasted that his influence was unimpaired, and had, unasked, promised several of his colleagues that they should retain their offices. He was received by the king with the most marked contempt. Bolingbroke, who had more wisely absented himself, enjoyed the conspicuous disgrace of his rival, and was contented with making private, but unavailing applications for an interview.

The frequent dismissals, and the new appointments, discovered that the king was not disposed even to maintain appearances towards a party which he looked upon as composed of enemies. The ministerial arrangements were now completed.

On the 17th of September, Lord Townshend had been sworn in secretary of state, and being allowed to nominate his colleague, he, at the instance of Horace Walpole, had chosen Stanhope. The ministry

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which Townshend formed was of course entirely Whig in its party character. Cowper was Lord Chancellor, Marlborough commander-in-chief; Walpole contented himself with the office of paymaster of the forces; Halifax was placed at the head of the commissioners of the treasury; Wharton was privy seal; Pulteney, secretary at war; Sunderland, whose talents and patriotism had effaced the recollections of his parentage, and had earned for him popularity, was lord lieutenant of Ireland; Orford was first commissioner of the admiralty; Devonshire, lord steward of the household; and Shrewsbury, whose recent services had atoned for his former desertion, received, as a pledge of reconciliation, the place of groom of the stole. Nottingham, who had for sometime acted with the Whigs, was declared president of the council, and the inferior places were distributed exclusively among the Whigs. Somers, whose character and ability had for so long a time rendered him the leader of the constitutional party, has been already mentioned, his melancholy decay of intellect had deprived his country of the most able of her statesmen.

He must be very ignorant of the history of this period, and of the extent to which the two parties carried their hostility, who censures Townshend for forming his ministry entirely from his own party. The animosity which raged between Whigs and Tories was at this time so violent, that it assumed

the complexion of personal hatred ; the factions never consented to meet in the council-chamber, except with the intention of contesting its undivided possession. Halifax, when disappointed in his expectation of the premiership, is indeed said to have advocated a coalition administration, which he undertook to construct ; but this proposition was founded upon jealousy of Townshend and personal ambition, no such a ministry could have been stable. This consideration would alone justify Townshend in the exclusiveness of his choice ; but he had a much graver reason. How could he recommend to posts of confidence and power men whom he looked upon as traitors to their country, and whom he knew had been lately engaged in a conspiracy to destroy her institutions and trample on her liberties ?

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In January the parliament was dissolved by proclamation. This document was in itself a manifesto against the Tories ; it significantly pointed at them as evil men, who were disaffected to the Protestant succession ; attributed to them all the national difficulties, the stagnation of trade, the interruption of navigation, and the accumulation of debt ; and called upon the electors to send up to parliament such as had shown a firmness to the Protestant succession it was in danger.*

* Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 24.

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The Tories endeavoured in vain to raise their customary rallying cry of "The church is in danger;" the people were more occupied in estimating the peril to which it had just been exposed, than in reading those prognostications of Whig spoliation which were so assiduously dispersed about the country. In the elections the Whigs had a great preponderance; many of them being returned with particular instructions to inquire who were the promoters of the treaties of Utrecht. The nature of these treaties was now become fully known; the much-prized stipulation for the demolition of Dunkirk was discovered to be useless, and the Spanish treaty of commerce, when acted upon, was found, instead of giving England peculiar advantages, to burden her commerce with duties seven per cent. greater than had before been paid.* This discovery had great effect upon the elections.

In the house of lords, the ministry carried the election of their list of the sixteen Scotch representative peers. No trifling success, since defeat would have made a difference of thirty-two votes in a house containing only one hundred and fifty-seven English peers capable of voting.† Against this good fortune must be placed the death of the patriotic Earl of Wharton, whose whole course of public life had

* Tindal.

vii., p. 27 The number stated in

† See the list of peers for this the text is exclusive of the bishops.
parliament in the Parl. Hist., vol.

been honest and consistent, who never injured the cause of liberty, except by his violence in its advocacy, an error which often accompanies sincerity, and whose private life has been too much blackened by men, in whose eyes his real crime was his political conduct. He died on the 12th of April, at the age of sixty-seven, having lived to give his vote to swell the majority for censuring the measures he had so constantly opposed.

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The first division in the two houses proclaimed the ascendancy of the Whigs. The address proposed in either house conveyed a direct censure upon the late government. The lords promised their exertions to *recover* the reputation of the kingdom in foreign parts, the loss of which, they added, they hoped to convince the world, by their acts, was by no means to be imputed to the nation in general. The majority was sixty-six against thirty-three. The commons were yet stronger in their censures, and added a threat, that they would bring the authors of these disastrous measures to condign punishment; a threat, which the minority well knew was not idly put forth. The division in the house was two hundred and forty-four to one hundred and thirty-eight.

In the debates, which preceded these parliamentary victories, the Tories distinguished themselves by their bold defence of the measures which were called in question. Bolingbroke, in the lords, and Wynd-

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ham, in the commons, showed no signs of apprehension, and abated nothing of their usual confidence of tone; but they failed to produce any effect upon their auditors: the commons listened more attentively to Stanhope, when he denied the report that the present ministers never designed to call the late managers to account, than they did to the transparent sophistry of Wyndham, which was no sooner exhibited than demolished.*

The measures of severity, which were now commenced, had been resolved upon before the king landed in England. It is said that Walpole, smarting under the recollection of his expulsion and imprisonment, and aided by Stanhope, had thus early obtained from the king a consent to the proscriptions which the most violent of his party meditated. But when he triumphantly related this consent to Somers, the infirm old statesman endeavouring in vain to dissuade him, shed tears at the prospect of the miseries which so extensive a persecution would bring upon his country. Bolingbroke, who saw in the distance the rising sands, thought that it was Marlborough who had conjured up the storm. Marlborough, doubtless, had every incentive to vengeance, and, although he assumed no prominent part himself, lent his best wishes to the prosecutions. As early

* Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 50.

as January, in this year, Bolingbroke, in an interview with D'Iberville, said, he knew that the Whigs had resolved to cut off the heads of Oxford, Strafford, and London, that Marlborough forced it on ; and although Halifax and the Whigs of the junto were opposed to it in their hearts, they thought it necessary to follow the torrent. He would, he said, to France.*

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In pursuance of their design, the commons addressed the crown for possession of the papers which had been seized ; and appointed, by ballot, a secret committee of twenty-one members to examine them. Walpole declared, in private conversation, that during the progress of the recent Tory intrigues, many particulars of them had been revealed to the Whig leaders ; and that he himself had received particular information, from eyewitnesses, of a meeting between the leading ministers and members of parliament, at which, the object of discussion was, the means of repealing the act of Settlement. With such information, the Whigs, doubtless, now looked forward to the complete development of the recent Jacobite plot. They were entirely disappointed. Bolingbroke's caution had been so great, that there was no paper among this voluminous collection, which furnished any direct proof upon the subject. More fortunate than Coleman, he had overlooked no evi-

* D'Iberville au Roi, Mackintosh. MSS.

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dence of his treason, but had conveyed it all away, or, more prudent, perhaps, he had never suffered such documents to exist after they had been read.

Foiled in this expectation, the committee were, therefore, compelled to found their charges upon the public acts of the late ministers ; and they certainly produced, from the secret machinery by which the peace had been wrought, abundant matter for censure. But when they tortured these delinquencies into acts of high treason, they regarded the end rather than the means ; they acted with the usual violence of a triumphant party when individual responsibility is lost by its division ; they punished the error they could prove with the penalty of the crime they could not, and revived that weapon of constructive treason which had so often been wielded against the constitution.

It is a subject of satisfaction, that no blood was spilt upon the impeachments which followed upon the report of the secret committee. Bolingbroke, having remained in England until the last moment, appearing every where in public, and making every exertion to rally his party, seeing that all was lost, suddenly fled from London by night, and reached Calais in disguise. On the 10th of June, Walpole moved his impeachment. This demonstration was followed by the impeachment of the Earl of Oxford, and so powerful was the feeling of the house, that

neither of these two ministerial leaders, lately so powerful both in the senate and throughout the nation, could find an advocate bold enough to divide the house upon the question. The Duke of Ormond, who came next, was the most popular nobleman in the kingdom; honoured and respected, even by the Whigs, magnificent in his style of living, liberal to the people, of undoubted bravery: esteemed by all parties as a man of unblemished honour, and loved for his real benevolence, Ormond was the idol of the crowd. Perhaps, had he relied less on this popularity, he had escaped impeachment; but when he made use of it to insult the victorious party,* and appeared to insinuate, that those who were afraid to accuse intended to assassinate him, the ministers no longer hesitated. The duke's conduct certainly admitted of defence, since he had acted only as a soldier, under the orders of a responsible minister; but a majority of two hundred and thirty-four against one hundred and eighty-seven, after a long debate, voted his impeachment.

The Earl of Strafford, who had been ambassador extraordinary at the States, and one of the British plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, was the next and the last of those who were deemed worthy of impeachment for their misconduct during the late reign.

* Tindal.

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The resolution against this nobleman was carried by a majority of more than three to one. It affords a curious illustration of the power of the church at this period, that amid the general indignation, which had not spared even the popular Duke of Ormond, the mere instrument of others, no one attempted to call to account the Bishop of London, who had been an active plenipotentiary during all the negotiations. The most intrepid of the dominant party confined themselves to a sneer at his escape, by his benefit of clergy, while the ministerial speakers nearly avowed their apprehension of attacking a churchman. Mr. Aislaby, who moved the impeachment of Strafford, congratulated the house "that nothing could be proved against the bishop, since it gave them an opportunity to convince the world that the church was not in danger." *

The resolution to prosecute these four noblemen, had been not a little strengthened by a recent proclamation issued by the pretender, in which, speaking of the late queen, he said, "of whose good intentions towards us we could not for some time past well doubt, and this was the reason we then sat still, expecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately prevented by her deplorable death."† If these expressions were intended to punish the

* Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 72.

† Tindal.

vacillating conduct of the late ministers, the design was not without its success; the publication of the manifesto strengthened the hands of their prosecutors and increased their peril. It was not long before the conviction of the nation was justified by the intelligence that Bolingbroke and Ormond had betaken themselves to the mimic court of the pretender, and had received parts in the pageantries which were there performed.

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CHAPTER III.

The Tories now a Jacobite party—Rebellion of 1715—Unpopularity of the king—Dangerous state of the nation—The Septennial Bill—Contest of the factions upon—Shippen—He teaches the Tories to adopt for the occasion popular sentiments.

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IN the reign of Anne, it was only a section of the Tories which plotted for the succession of the pretender; in the reign of George the First, there were but few of that party who were not also Jacobites. The prosecution of their leaders had enraged their followers; nothing but a king of their own, they thought, could raise them to their wonted supremacy, and enable them to retort the indignities they had recently endured. According to the testimony of those who had the best opportunity of judging, the Tories were now entirely committed, as a party, to the cause of the pretender. Bolingbroke's conduct is alone decisive to this. Bolingbroke was a man who had no sympathy with the common notions of his

party. A deist, he cared nothing for the Church of England, save as a party engine, and a convenient theme for declamation. He laughed to scorn the claim of divine right put forward by the Stuarts; and he despised the dogma of non-resistance, as an attempt to eradicate by an apothegm, passions which the whole artificial fabric of society has been constructed only to control. As a statesman, he saw nothing in the character of the pretender which promised advantages to England, from his government, that could compensate the cost at which he would reach the throne. Hear his own description of that person. “The chevalier’s religion is not founded on the love of virtue and the detestation of vice; on a sense of that obedience which is due to the will of the Supreme Being, and a sense of those obligations which creatures formed to live in a mutual dependence on one another lie under. The spring of his whole conduct is fear, fear of the horns of the devil and of the flames of hell. He has been taught to believe that nothing but a blind submission to the Church of Rome, and a strict adherence to all the terms of that communion, can save him from these dangers. He has all the superstition of a capuchin; but I found in him no tincture of the religion of a prince.”*

“The pretender’s education has rendered him

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* Letter to Sir William Windham.

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infinitely less fit than his uncle, and at least as unfit as his father, to be king of Great Britain. Add to this, that there is no resource in his understanding. Men of the best sense find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are of all the strongest ; but he is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs, like the sword of Damocles, over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest.”*

This description was certainly written when Bolingbroke was no longer a Jacobite ; but it appears that he held this opinion of the pretender’s character even while employed in his service. The Earl of Stair, who was ambassador at the French Court, writing to Horace Walpole an account of the ill-founded reports then prevalent at Paris with respect to Bolingbroke, remarks, “ I believe all poor Harry’s fault was, that he could not play his part with a grave enough face ; he could not help laughing now and then at such kings and queens.”†

Bolingbroke’s conduct was not therefore prompted by any affection for the person, or respect for the character of the pretender ; his real motive may be assigned in his own words. Accounting for his not having joined the pretender immediately upon his

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

† Coxe’s Walpole, App. vol. ii., p. 308.

arrival in France, he says, "Had I engaged with the pretender before the party acted for him, or required of me that I should do so, I had taken the air of being his man; whereas I looked upon myself as theirs: I had gone about to bring them into his measures; whereas I never intended, even since that time, to do any thing more than to make him, as far as possible, act conformably to their views."* "At last," he tells the Tories "your commands came." And he gives a circumstantial detail of the manner in which he received and how he executed them. He joined the pretender, because "he looked on his party to be under oppression and to call for his assistance."†

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And what was the object of the Tory party in thus identifying themselves with the Jacobites? The question may be again answered in the words of their great leader: "You thought of restoring the pretender by the strength of the Tories, and of opposing a Tory king to a Whig king. You took him up as the instrument of your revenge and of your ambition; you looked on him as your creature, and never doubted of making what terms you pleased with him. This is so true, that the same language is still held to the catechumens in Jacobitism. Were the contrary to be avowed

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

† Ibid.

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even now, the party in England would soon diminish.”*

The event of all these intrigues was the rebellion of 1715, happily frustrated by the imprudence of its projectors and the vigilance of the ministry. Fortunately for themselves, the chief parliamentary leaders of the Tories were unable to consummate their treason; the seizure and temporary confinement of Windham and his friends, doubtless saved their lives. It is a remarkable instance of that recklessness of falsehood and contempt of probability, so often found in the professions of a fallen party, that the cry by which the Tory chiefs rallied their followers around the standard of a popish prince was, “The church is in danger.” The church was in danger from the spoliative propensities of the Whigs, and they called to its rescue a Roman Catholic and a Stuart. Insulting as this pretence was to the common sense of the people, it was nevertheless so unblushingly and so successfully repeated, that it was even thought worthy of particular notice in a speech from the throne.†

* Letter to Sir William Windham. has been the main artifice employed in carrying on this wicked

† Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 222. “The and traitorous design. This insinuation, after the solemn assurances I have given, and my having in danger under my government, laid hold on all opportunities to

The column of British freedom, reared with such persevering labour and guarded with such sleepless zeal, at this moment trembled to its base. It was not only that the youthful scion of a chivalrous family, clothed with the mysteriously potent mantle of hereditary right, and surrounded by devoted bands of hardy mountaineers, held possession of one section of the kingdom, and prepared to seize upon what he claimed to be his birthright—it was not only that, throughout every county of England, there smouldered, unseen, a fire of loyalty to his house, which a breath could convert into flame—these, alone, were symptoms pregnant with danger; but there was one still more fearful: the constitutional king who filled the throne was become personally unpopular. Imminent danger had once aroused the nation to contest, and the people had struggled manfully for the principle which placed a Hanoverian upon the throne. But a multitude looks rather to tangible facts than to mere abstracts. It is not often that a large body can be prevailed upon to keep a principle long in view. The people began now to seek the fruits

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do every thing that may tend to the minds of my faithful subjects, the advantage of the Church of or that they can be so far misled England, is both unjust and un- as to think the Church of England grateful; nor can I believe so is to be secured by setting a popish groundless and malicious a calum- pretender on the throne." ny can make any impression upon

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of theirs. They found little cause of satisfaction. A contempt of foreigners is a prejudice common to all nations ; in England its strength almost forms part of the national character ; what then must our forefathers have felt at seeing the avenues of their national palaces clogged with the underlings of a miniature principality ; at seeing the menials and confidants of a potentate almost too minute for the recognition of the powerful sovereigns of Europe, stiling themselves into importance as their master increased in dignity, and mingling, with an air of confident superiority, among the nobility of England? In the young chevalier, as he was painted by his partisans, they saw the brilliant qualities of his uncle, and they had forgotten that man's vices. They saw also, with that sympathy which courage and constancy will always command, the severities which stripped of patrimony, deprived of liberty, or shed the blood of, the representatives of many of the most ancient of the national families. The exhibition of the rebels of the nobler ranks, which were taken at Preston, and paraded, pinioned, through the streets of London, excited only rage in the breasts of the Tories—even Whigs thought that British peers, although rebels, might have been spared this degradation.

The justice of the impeachments which followed none could deny, but many dissuaded the execution of the sentences. Upon this point Nottingham se-

ceded from his new friends, and rejoined his original party. His brother and son followed in his train, thus removing all leaven of Toryism from the cabinet. Even Stanhope is said to have interposed his influence in favour of one of the prisoners; and the vote of the house of commons, by which all interference was declined, was carried only by a majority of seven.*

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That the measures of severity which were at this crisis adopted were just in themselves, and merciful in their consequences, few will now dispute; that they were absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation the characteristic humanity and mildness of Walpole, their chief instigator, will not allow us to doubt; but the divisions which they produced in a Whig house of commons, and even in a Whig cabinet, enable us to judge of the effects which they must have had upon the nation at large. The effervescing elements of rebellion, which the defeat at Preston had forced back, at the moment when they were about to burst, were still struggling for a vent; not a county of England, scarcely a hamlet in Scotland, was without its local conspiracy. In this conjuncture the hopes of the conspirators were placed upon the dissolution which must take place at the end of the following session. England, dizzy with the clash of factions

* Seward's Anecdotes, vol. ii., p. 316, edit. 1795. Parl. Hist. Coxe's Walpole.

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and sickening at the spectacle of civil bloodshed, would then be called upon to elect the arbiter of her destiny. Such the new house of commons it was allowed must be. The avowed expectations of the Tories, the anxiety, and even terror of the Whigs, show that there was at least reason to fear that the electors would return a Tory majority. Had this happened, the second session of the next parliament would have been opened by James III.

This approaching danger was met by a bold and unconstitutional* assumption of power, which nothing but necessity could in any respect justify, and which the necessity of the present case did not justify in its full extent. When Townshend proposed, and the Whigs in their alarm agreed, to introduce the Sep-

* An editor of Blackstone's Commentaries argues this question in the spirit of a mere lawyer. He denies that this was an unconstitutional exertion of authority, because "it never can be supposed that the next, or any succeeding parliament, had not the power of repealing the Triennial act." Undoubtedly they had the *power* to repeal either the Triennial act or Magna Charta; they had the *power* also to consent to an act annihilating their house altogether; but this destructive power, when exercised upon one of the most prominent features of a constitution, settled by a recent revolution, was surely unconstitutionally exercised. The learned editor has confounded the terms legal and constitutional; his author was more clear headed, he cites the circumstance only as an instance of the "*vast authority of parliament.*" Christian's Blackstone, vol. i., p. 188. Every new safeguard of the privileges of the subject becomes, in a free country, immediately upon its acquisition, amalgamated with the constitution.

ennial bill, and alter the constitution of parliament, they adopted a permanent remedy to meet a momentary danger. The most perfect of human institutions must experience emergencies to which they are unequal. In such a case, the Romans endured a temporary despotism, the Spartans suspended their laws for a day. But neither thought it prudent to change their ordinary constitution, in order to prepare for a conjuncture which might never recur. The dictatorship was not perpetual, nor were the laws of Lycurgus abolished. In suspending, at all hazard, the general election, and in placing it beyond the reach of early expectation, the Whigs were doubtless right; in disguising their design under the transparent mask of a general measure, they were as certainly wrong.*

When the preamble of the Septennial bill stated, that "a general election might probably, at that con-

* Such, according to Boyer, was the original opinion of the promoters of this bill. "It was at first proposed only to suspend the Triennial act for once, whereby this parliament would have continued three years beyond the time at which it was to determine."—*Political State*, vol. xi., p. 428. Upon introducing the bill to the commons, Mr. Lyddall said, "The electors and people of all the bo-

roughs in England having been, for several years past, both bribed and preached into the pretender's interest, and a dislike of the Protestant succession, it becomes rather necessity than choice to apply an extraordinary remedy to an extraordinary disease."—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. vii., p. 311. This is the only consistent paragraph of that gentleman's speech.

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juncture, when a restless and popish faction were designing and endeavouring to renew the rebellion within the kingdom, and an invasion from abroad, be destructive to the peace and security of the government," it stated the only argument that was available in its favour. It is amusing, however, to mark the other arguments with which this measure was supported and attacked. These debates furnish a remarkable instance of how easily men adopt any propositions, when they have once become converts to the conclusion they appear to favour. Unwilling to manifest any distrust of the electors, and denying that they were at all unpopular, the Whigs became suddenly awake to the great inconvenience of popular tumults; the debaucheries occasioned by elections, and the corruption of the morals and principles of the people. They sighed over the animosities which these frequent contests created throughout the country, and declaimed against the exorbitance of their expense as ruinous to the candidates. They appropriated for the occasion all the common-places of Toryism, and paraded inconveniences which are as powerful to prove that parliaments should endure twenty years as that they should last for seven.

The Tories, on the other hand, seized the artillery of their opponents. The Whigs would not avow that they proposed this measure because they were unpopular, but the Tories dare not avow that their

ground of opposition was their hope of bringing in the pretender. They, therefore, harangued on the topics of liberty, and discovered a sudden panic at the power of the crown, and a vehement affection for the rights of the people. They became assertors of the privileges of the house of commons, and suddenly stood forth as the champions of those principles which it had long been the business of the party to persecute and deride.*

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When the measure was first proposed, it was received with a shout of disapprobation by the great body of the Whigs; it was only, as a contemporary observes, time and good arguments† that changed their opposition into support. Doubtful of its success, therefore, the ministers first introduced it into the house of lords, that, should it fail there, its unpopularity might not affect the elections of their party in the commons. The Duke of Devonshire, the son of the friend of Russell, brought it forward; thirty noblemen having met the night before at his house, and arranged its details. In the debates, the most pertinent remark was that made by the young Earl of Dorset, who worthily inherited a title which the elegant taste, as well as the patriotism of his father, had distinguished above the common crowd of herit-

* Moyle to Horace Walpole; Coxe's Walpole, vol. ii., p. 62

† Ibid.

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able dignities. When he said that, "Those who then spoke against the bill would be for it, if it served their turn," he stated an undoubted truth; but it was one which might have been retorted with equal justice upon himself and his party. The Tories thought the most witty observation was that made on their side by the Earl of Peterborough, who was a Tory because Marlborough was a Whig. This leading member of a party which claimed to be the champion of our Protestant church, said that, "if the present parliament continued beyond the time for which they were chosen, he knew not how to express the manner of their existence, unless, begging leave of that venerable bench (he continued, turning to the bishops), they had recourse to the distinction used in the Athanasian Creed, for they would be neither created nor made, but proceeding." The bill passed the lords by a majority of thirty-six.

The character of the question at issue appears more distinctly in the debate in the commons. The opposition was there led by Shippen, whose energy and talent had placed him at the head of his party, but whose Jacobite principles were so strong, that he scorned to cloak them in conversation, and could not always prevent their ebullition even in debate.

William Shippen, who played so conspicuous a part in the contests of the two factions at this time, was one of the few honest statesmen of the period. The

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son and brother of clergymen, he was, of course, educated to admire the absolute and indefeasible title of the hereditary monarch, and to feel the dignity of a blind obedience to his will. His frugal habits were amply satisfied by a patrimonial estate of about £400 a-year, and, although he received the large sum of £70,000 upon his marriage, the penurious and unsocial temper of his wife afforded him no temptation to expense. Thus amply provided, he espoused the cause of his party for itself alone. Walpole frequently declared, long after his power had passed away, that he would not say who had been corrupted, but he would mention one whom he had found incorruptible, and that man was Shippen. So strongly and unreservedly had this man attached himself to the cause of the Stuarts, that neither misfortune nor lapse of time could shake his affection. "Robin and I (he was accustomed to say of himself and Walpole) are two honest men. He is for King George and I for King James." Shippen was one of those partisans who suffer no considerations of expediency to check the direct pursuit of their object. When the peculiar circumstances of the time had driven him into an alliance with a section of the old Whig party, he did not hesitate to provoke their indignation, by frequent propositions of bringing in the pretender; and he often avowed, in conversation, that he shaped

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his conduct in parliament in accordance with the instructions he received from Rome.*

This Tory chief, therefore, since he acted upon principle, must have held those original tenets of his party, which alone would justify his present acts; under Charles, he would have been an abhorrer and a subscriber to the Oxford decree; under James, he would have mourned over the "general and imperfect repentance" of Monmouth. Yet this advocate for absolute monarchy, this assertor of the impotence of parliament to alter the succession, now harangued the commons upon the importance of maintaining their privileges, and declared that it was inconsistent with their honour to receive from the lords any bill which concerned the constitution of their house. He deprecated a despotic and military government as the greatest calamity that could befall a freeborn people.† He made an elaborate review of the history of parliaments from the time of Edward I.; he spoke of parliaments that had acted like slaves, and kings that had acted like tyrants; he pointed to the parliaments of Henry VIII. and that of Charles II., and the conclusion he arrived at was, that, "Long parliaments will naturally grow either formidable or contemptible."

* Coxe's Life of Walpole.

† Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 313.

One of the most remarkable passages in this speech is that in which the speaker declares, "There is no injury or dishonour to the crown to be obliged, by a law, to do what, in justice to the subject and convenience to itself, it ought to do, without a law;" a sentence which, had it appeared in "Julian the Apostate," had certainly been deemed worthy of damnatory observation in the Oxford decree.

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These debates form an era in the history of the national parties, since they afford the first instance of the Tories assuming, for a temporary purpose, the advocacy of popular rights. Since that time the expedient has been so commonly practised, that it is now an ordinary and well-understood branch of party strategy; but we should not forget to render to Shippen and Wyndham the honour of its invention. The conduct of these able leaders appears to have been prompted by a profound knowledge of the resources of their party. Toryism was formed for government; it is only a creed for rulers. Possessed of the countenance of the monarch, the influence of the court, and the administration of the national resources, it has proved vigorous, resolute, and efficient; but, deprived of these, it is nothing. When driven from the council, the Tory leaders were generals without troops; upon political matters they had no

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sympathy with the people ; and unless the efforts of the clergy could procure for them mobs to shout “the church is in danger,” they were compelled to wait in patience until some private intrigue, or some want of compliance upon the part of their rivals, should enable them to supplant them at court. Shippen and Wyndham now undertook to remove this weakness ; and the protean character of the party has been so well sustained, that Tory writers have appeared who have argued, with equal plausibility, some, that the principles of their party are essentially democratic, and others, that the present Whigs are, in fact, the ancient Tories. It is not because these paradoxes are laughed at by all but the most illiterate of the members of the party for whose service they are made, that therefore they are quite incapable of defence. The inconsistencies in the professions of their party will yield abundant spurious arguments, we must refer to their acts and objects to demonstrate their political character. Shippen, in this debate, commenced the new system ; he assumed the mask of a patriot, in order that he might introduce a tyrant.

The Septennial bill passed the commons by a majority of two hundred and sixty-four against one hundred and twenty-one.*

* Parl. Hist., vol. vii.

No sooner was the bill become law, than the Tories, in conversation, threw away the mask, and confessed, in bitter and railing disappointment, that the Whigs had broken all their schemes.

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CHAPTER IV.

Disagreement between the King and the Prince of Wales—Schism in the Whig cabinet—Its origin—Sunderland—His discontent—Intrigues—Is joined by Stanhope—Progress of their intrigues—Dismissal of Townshend—Review of Stanhope's conduct—Formation of the Stanhope administration.

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THE King was already impatient of his residence in a kingdom, to the language and habits of which he was alike a stranger. His ministers had found themselves compelled to indulge him with a repeal of that clause in the act of Settlement, which restrained the sovereign from leaving the kingdom, and the Tories had readily consented, willing, under any circumstances, to get rid of the presence of a king they hated. No sooner, therefore, had the parliament been prorogued, than George, accompanied by Stanhope, set out for his electorate. Previously, however, to his departure, it became necessary to provide for the safety of the kingdom during his

absence, and modern usage prescribed that the Prince of Wales should be left as regent, with all the power of the absent sovereign. To this, however, the king strongly objected; and his undisguised reluctance to trust his authority to his son, discovered to the nation a jealousy which, although it had long been known to the courtiers, had never before been publicly avowed. The dislike which George so openly manifested for his heir, is apparently so unnatural, that a French memoir writer* has not scrupled to attribute it to a suspicion that the prince was not his son. The variance may, however, be accounted for, without having recourse to so extreme a supposition. The natural affections are seldom found to flourish

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* St. Simon. This person, doubtless, draws his inference from the subsequent accusation against the wife of George I., the beautiful and hapless Sophia of Zell. The fame of this princess had reached every court in Europe, and the neglect of her husband had been censured long before the story arrived that Count Koningsmark had been seized, proceeding from her private chamber, and stabbed in the presence of the elector. But whether Sophia was really guilty, or whether, as appears to be now the more prevailing opinion, she was the victim of a woman's jealousy, this passage in her life could throw no doubt upon the paternity of her son—born long before Koningsmark came to Hanover, and long before suspicion rested upon her fame. Whatever her errors they were rigorously atoned for by two-and-thirty years of captivity, and a death which happened shortly before the accession of a son, who believed her innocent, and cherished her memory, and whose first act, after his accession, would have been to release her from confinement, and acknowledge her queen dowager of England.

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with great luxuriance under the shadow of a throne ; that of Great Britain is peculiarly hostile to their growth. In England, there is always a great and powerful party in opposition ; this party is always eager to obtain, as an accession to its ranks, the heir to the crown, and it is usually able to protect him from his father's resentment. Where such a refuge from parental authority is open, it will seldom be neglected, and when a breach has once occurred, no pains will be spared to keep it open. The Tories of this time were not ignorant of the advantage such tactics offered ; they had paid all the homage which was due to the throne to its next heir, and the prince was too proud of the importance he thus obtained to consider himself any longer dependent on his father. Under such circumstances, a family rupture was inevitable ; the Prince of Wales was soon at the head of the opposition to his father's government. George, learning from his ministers, that there was no precedent for limiting the power of his son, while the kingdom was left in his hands, did, nevertheless, all that precedent could be found to warrant. Instead of leaving him with the title of regent, he bestowed upon him that of guardian of the realm, and lieutenant.*

* Boyer, and after him Coxe, unknown since the time of Edward the Black Prince ; but this him, say, that this was an office appears to be incorrect.

This disagreement had considerable influence upon the fortunes of the public men of this reign, since upon no subject was the king so intractable as that of suspecting his ministers of caballing with the prince.

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During the king's absence in Holland, a schism occurred in the cabinet, which threatened great danger to the power of the Whigs, and tarnished the characters of those who contrived it. Several occurrences had already taken place, which had changed the relative positions of many members of the party, although that of the faction itself remained unaltered. In the preceding year, the eloquent and ingenious Halifax had been withdrawn by death, at a time when, it was more than suspected by his colleagues, that he was caballing with their opponents. It was the misfortune of the Whigs of this generation that they had too many leaders. Halifax had thought himself entitled to the influence which Townshend obtained, and to a still higher post; and Somerset had been removed, on account of the indiscreet resentment he expressed upon the arrest of his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham.

The unfortunate division, which now took place, was occasioned by the ambition of Stanhope and the jealousy of Sunderland. The latter nobleman had long been known to be disaffected towards his colleagues. As the son of the infamous minister of

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James, Sunderland had, upon his entrance into public life, little claim to the confidence of his countrymen; but when his father retired from a world where none would any longer trust him, to await at Althorp, the close of a conspicuous but dishonourable career, the son came forward, and threw himself with such hearty zeal into the ranks of the Whigs, that his father's faults were speedily forgotten in admiration of his own personal merit. Having married the second daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, he came recommended also by the patronage of this illustrious man, under whom he had already served, both in military and diplomatic capacities. Throughout the reign of Queen Anne he had steadily adhered to his party, who had raised him, against the will of the queen, to the office of secretary of state. We have already seen that the first unequivocal notice of the ascendancy of the Tories, in that reign, was the dismissal of Somerset without the knowledge of his colleagues. Upon this occasion, Anne offered him a pension of £3000 a-year; but the young earl, with a nobility of spirit, which he did not inherit, replied, that, "if he could not have the honour to serve his country, he would never plunder it." Having thus suffered for his party, Sunderland considered himself entitled to the rank of its leader; and although the omission of his name from the list of lords justices might have convinced him that such was not the opinion of others,

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he is said to have proposed himself for the chief secretaryship upon the accession of George, and did not conceal his disgust when his application was refused. He now conceived a jealousy of Townshend who had carried away the prize he coveted, a jealousy which could not be allayed by his appointment to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland, a post nominally of higher dignity. Sunderland retained this office only a few months, and then resigning upon the plea of ill health, he accepted that of lord privy seal. During this time he had never been absent from England, but his name very seldom occurs in the journals of the house of lords, and he appears to have taken no part whatever in the direction of affairs or the defence of his colleagues. Soon after the departure of the king, Sunderland also left England avowedly for the benefit of his health, but not before he had sought a meeting with his colleagues, assured them he had forgotten all former differences, and pledged himself thenceforward to labour heartily in their service. Walpole reported these professions to Stanhope, but he added, "When I consider that common interest should procure sincerity among us, I am astonished to think there is reason to fear the contrary."* Sunderland immediately set out for Aix la Chapelle, and after a short residence there, applied for leave to visit

* Walpole to Stanhope. Coxe.

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the court at Hanover. So little was he at that time the favourite of the king, that this permission was with difficulty obtained by Stanhope, who at this time certainly had no intention of joining him in a plot against his colleagues. Upon his arrival there he found Stanhope high in favour with the king, on account of the successful issue to which he had brought the negotiation he had been conducting with France; and George, eager for the conclusion of a treaty which would leave him free to indulge his personal enmity against the Czar, and at leisure to anticipate the threatened hostility of Sweden. Sunderland immediately applied himself to gain the confidence of the king and the friendship of Stanhope. He had already a party in England who shared his discontent. Carleton, Cadogan, Lechmere, Hampden, and even Marlborough, were discontented with their treatment: could he add Stanhope to the number he might yet satisfy his pique. A circumstance occurred which greatly facilitated his design. The treaty with France had been concerted with the Dutch; they were to be parties to it, and the British plenipotentiaries at the Hague had solemnly assured them that it should not be concluded without their being made parties. When, however, the terms had been definitively settled, it was found that the forms of the Dutch republic were upon such occasions so numerous and dilatory, that a considerable time must

elapse before they could be completed. As no objection was raised to the treaty itself, the king and Stanhope both considered that the spirit of the compact with the Dutch would be fulfilled, if a provision was inserted that they might come in whenever they pleased; and they therefore directed the immediate execution of the treaty. With this, Horace Walpole, one of the plenipotentiaries at the Hague, thinking his personal honour pledged to the Dutch, refused to comply. A delay ensued, which, upon a comparison of the dates of the letters that passed between England and Hanover, seems likely to have been attributed by the king and Stanhope to Townshend.

Several of Stanhope's recent letters appear the productions rather of a courtier than a minister. He had pressed Townshend and Walpole to comply with the king's demand of money, for payment of the auxiliaries hired from Saxe Gotha and Munster; a command which Stanhope well knew Walpole could not legally obey without a vote of the house of commons; and he appeared ready to advocate the northern crusade which was now the favourite project of the king.* Townshend had warmly defended his friend, but seems to have already become aware that he was rapidly losing the confidence of the king. He accuses Bothmar as the author of this change, and

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* Letter to Townshend of October 16. Coxe.

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attributes his hostility to his having thwarted him in some of those infamous projects to get money which he had every day on foot.* It may, however, be doubted whether he had not already begun to suspect Stanhope. Even at the commencement of this year, it occurred to the French envoy, that Walpole and Townshend entertained a jealousy of their colleague. His knowledge of the French language gave him great facilities for ingratiating himself with the king, and he had used these so carefully that he was admitted to him even in his convivial moments, and often supped with him and his mistress in private—a privilege which no other member of the cabinet enjoyed.† If Townshend did entertain such suspicions they were soon too amply verified. No sooner did circumstances present a plausible ground for supposition that Townshend had opposed or neglected the immediate execution of the French treaty, than Stanhope, without communicating with his friend, or offering any opportunity for explanation, went to the king and tendered his resignation. The result could not but have been foreseen. George being as anxious as his secretary for the conclusion of the treaty, of course would not allow his minister to retire; on the contrary, he turned all his indigna-

* Townshend to Stanhope, October 16, O. S. Coxe.

† Mackintosh MSS.

tion upon those whom he supposed to have thwarted his views. Stanhope was ordered to write a letter expressive of the king's displeasure, couched in terms of great severity, and calling upon Townshend to justify his conduct. The same post conveyed one from Sunderland, which, as it had not the pretence of the royal command, was impertinent as well as insulting. These letters immediately made known to Townshend the real state of affairs. Stanhope had terminated their private correspondence by requiring the minister to reply in French, that his letter might be laid before the king. Townshend complied, and by a plain and manly statement of facts, entirely refuted the charge which had been brought against him. To Sunderland's letter he vouchsafed no answer, to Stanhope he wrote only a few lines, expressive of the grief and disappointment his conduct had caused him, "The enclosed," he said, "is a copy of my letter to the king; my heart is so full of the thoughts of having received this usage from you, to whom I have always been so faithful a friend, that you will excuse my not saying any more at this time; I pray God forgive you, I do."*

In the mean time, and before the receipt of the king's letter, Horace Walpole, who had returned

* Townshend to Stanhope, November 1, 1716.

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from the Hague, was despatched with a communication to Hanover, intimating, in answer to a desire expressed by the king, that it would be possible to hold the parliament without his presence in England.

Upon his arrival in Holland, Horace Walpole learned the nature of the letter which had been just sent to England. Being in possession of all the facts and in the general confidence of the ministry, he explained the reason of the delay which had occurred, and exerted himself so effectually, that the king acknowledged himself deceived. Stanhope and Sunderland also confessed they had been in error, and desired a reconciliation. Townshend was admitted by all parties to stand fully justified. Townshend's vindictory letter arrived in season to confirm this state of things, and Horace Walpole set out from Hanover with the confidence that he had destroyed every cause of dissension. How great therefore must have been his surprise when, upon his arrival in England, he found that a despatch had accompanied him, removing Lord Townshend from the post of secretary, and containing a letter from Stanhope to the astonished minister, announcing, in the severe irony which may be so often read in the formal wording of an official document, that his majesty had, in consideration of the viscount's great services,

advanced him to “the greatest employment a king of England has to give” that of lord lieutenant of Ireland. CHAP.
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During the absence of the king, the Tories in England had been active in getting up addresses to the prince, thus increasing the confidence of their patron, and increasing even into hatred the jealousy of his father. Horace Walpole had disabused the king of the prejudices he had entertained against Townshend's conduct of the French treaty; but when the despatch of which he was the bearer was read, it furnished occasion for the secret advisers to observe, that Townshend and Walpole were caballing with the prince, and that it was at his instigation they suggested the possibility of holding a parliament before the king's return. No insinuation could be more false, but none also could be more fatal. The result was the immediate transmission of the dismissal which has been related, and which, travelling much faster than Horace Walpole, arrived immediately after his tidings of reconciliation.*

* Horace Walpole had despatched a messenger, by way of Calais, from the Hague on the 8th, (see his letter to Secretary Stanhope of that date), with a full account of his success. He however did not himself arrive in London until the 22d, which was the very day upon which Townshend received his dismissal. Twelve days had sufficed to remove all the favourable impressions which Horace Walpole had made, and to erase from Stanhope's memory all his recent protestations of fidelity.

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The messenger who brought this sentence of dismissal to Townshend, was instructed previously to deliver to Walpole a copy of the official letter, together with another from Stanhope, explaining and attempting to justify his conduct. Stanhope in this letter accuses the discarded secretary of courting the countenance of the prince, but insinuates that the king obtained his knowledge of this pretended intrigue through other channels than those known to himself and Sunderland. He intimates his wish that Townshend and Walpole should continue members of the government, as it was about to be remodelled, but plainly threatens, that if they should prove refractory, he was able to do without them. “If my Lord Townshend accepts of Ireland, which for a thousand reasons he ought to do, the cabinet council will remain just as it was, with the addition of the Duke of Kingston as privy seal. Mr. Methuen and I shall continue secretaries. But if my Lord Townshend shall decline Ireland; and if, which by some has been suggested, but which I cannot think possible, he should prevail upon you to offer to quit your appointments, the king, in this case hath engaged my Lord Sunderland and myself to promise that his lordship will be secretary, and I, unable and unequal as I am every way, should be chancellor of the exchequer for this session; the king declaring, that as long as he can find Whigs that will serve him he

will be served by them. Which good disposition his majesty shall not have reason to alter, by any backwardness in me, to expose myself to trouble or hazard. I am very sorry that my Lord Townshend's temper hath made it impracticable for him to continue secretary. The king will not bear him in that office, be the consequence what it will. This being the case, I hope and desire that you will endeavour to reconcile him to Ireland, which I once thought he did not dislike, and which I think he cannot now refuse, without declaring to the world that he will serve upon no other terms than being viceroy over father, son, and their three kingdoms. Is the Whig interest to be staked in defence of such a pretension; or is the difference to the Whig party, whether Lord Townshend be secretary or lieutenant of Ireland *tanti?*" *

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Such are the facts of this schism in the Whig party, as they have been discovered by the papers published by Mr. Coxe. These papers do not, however, enable us to judge, with certainty, whether Stanhope acted with deliberate treachery, or whether he yielded only to the sudden dictates of a dishonourable ambition. They do not enable us to determine how far the king was acted upon by the secret advice of his German confidants, how far by Sunderland, and how far

* Stanhope to Walpole, December 15, 1716.

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by Stanhope. The hostility of Sunderland was hardly disguised; had he made no parting promise to Walpole, he could scarcely be accused of dissimulation; as he was never trusted, he cannot be judged guilty of treachery. But the case is far otherwise as regards Stanhope. Those who are disposed to think harshly of all the public men of this period, may plausibly contend that, from the time that Stanhope had attracted the jealousy of his colleagues, by the familiarity of his intercourse with the king, he had entertained the design of supplanting Townshend. If he did entertain such a design, the opportunity he enjoyed when the king was separated from the rest of his responsible advisers, and surrounded by a set of greedy courtiers, was certainly not one to be neglected. At this conjuncture it would have been the policy of a skilful intriguer to take part with his master in all disputes; to embrace with readiness the overtures of Sunderland; to strengthen his own interest; to undermine that of his rivals; and, at the first colourable opportunity, to affect resentment and tender a resignation which he would then be sure would not be accepted. Having effected his object, his policy would be to close as soon as possible the breach his ambition had caused, and to unite the party under his own sway. Such are precisely the circumstances which appear against Stanhope; but his ordinary conduct seems to rebut

the presumption, that he acted with such refined and calculating treachery. We would rather believe that he found the king prejudiced against his minister, by the arts of those minions whose rapacity he had baulked, and that he was really indignant at the delay, which he construed into a tacit disapproval of the treaty he had negotiated.

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But, even receiving this the most favourable version of his conduct, how can we reconcile, with the dictates of an honourable mind, his immediately acting upon the impression he had received, without making any private remonstrance to his colleagues, or allowing time or opportunity for explanation? How can we justify him, when he added his voice to that of the crew of parasites who were railing against his friend?

Above all, how can we defend him when, after he was convinced that he had already wronged him by his suspicion, and condemned him without cause, he seized the first opportunity which he found (I am not supposing that he contrived it) to dispossess him, and to seize his post? The defiance which he cast to the friends of the minister he had supplanted, betrays an exultation which no man of public virtue or private friendship could have felt; the charge he made was notoriously false, and the excuses he condescended to assign were even more contemptible than his conduct. That George, because he suspected his ministers of civility to his son, should discard them for a party

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which openly supported that prince in his opposition, used him only as a means of personal annoyance, and had ever as their present object, the restoration of the Stuarts, is a supposition too absurd for any rational being to entertain. Yet this is the only excuse which Stanhope attempted to urge. In the most unfavourable view, Stanhope was guilty of wary and deliberate treachery; in the most favourable, his conduct was such as will never be imitated by any man who possesses a high sense of personal honor.

When the news of Townshend's removal was made public, the opinion of the nation was unequivocally expressed. The funds fell—the outcry against the German counsellors and their treacherous ally was general—the Jacobites openly rejoiced—and bets were freely offered upon the success of the pretender. The messenger who brought the important despatch was himself confounded, and he could find no better reason for the conduct of his principal than that, “to prevent the further torrent of the German influence, the secretary found himself, for the present, obliged to come into their measures, so disagreeable to himself.” He thus describes the effects of the despatch: “When I go into the city, all the considerable men crowd about me, and press me in the most earnest manner to give some reasons for these sudden and unexpected resolutions, to tell them who I thought were the advisers and contrivers of them. When I

go to the court, the very great ones there, to whom I had scarce the honour of being known before, salute me, and are also very solicitous to find out the true springs and causes of what they don't scruple aloud to call these extraordinary proceedings. Nay, it has there been said already, that never was any thing more unprecedented, than for his majesty, when out of the nation, with the counsel of one single minister only, to make so prodigious a change in his ministry. I must take the liberty to let you know, the world cries aloud against the secretary, and if his correspondents from hence be faithful, he must be sensible of it. For God's sake won't he consider; he not only forfeits his private honour, but will draw upon himself a number of enemies which he will find it impossible to subsist against."*

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The accounts he received of the popular indignation alarmed the new minister. He refused to accept Townshend's indignant refusal of the lord lieutenancy, and called upon him to sacrifice his resentment to the public good. He wrote the most importunate letters to Walpole and others of Townshend's friends, and procured similar applications to be made by those of the Dutch ministers, whose intimacy Townshend enjoyed, and whose judgment he respected.

Upon the arrival of the king in England, he seemed

* Thomas Brereton to Charles Stanhope. Coxe, vol. ii., p. 149.

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as fully impressed as Stanhope was of the danger he had drawn upon his crown. At an interview with Townshend, he confessed that he had been deceived by false reports, and apologized for his precipitation. He afterwards sent Bernsdorf to entreat him to accept the lieutenancy; to show him the danger which would accrue from his opposition; to point out that he could not, consistently with his dignity, restore the seals he had just withdrawn, and to promise, that no further changes should be made, and that he should be allowed in a short time to change his appointment for any other he might prefer. Townshend, knowing the mischievous effects which must follow any public breach in the Whig party, consented. The cabinet was apparently again united, and Stanhope was successful.

But although Townshend had thus patriotically refrained from any public expression of his resentment, it was not to be expected that cordiality or confidence could exist between him and the new minister. His immediate followers could not but resent the insult that had been offered to their leader; and without any instructions from him, perhaps contrary to his wishes, they became less strenuous in their support of the administration. Had Townshend and Walpole, immediately upon the dismissal of the former, gone into active opposition, they would have carried with them nearly the whole of the old Whig

party, and a hostile majority in the house of commons would have strangled Stanhope's administration in its birth. The king would then have been compelled to take back his minister; the disaffected Whigs would have rejoined their party, or would have sunk into political nonentities; and the Hanoverian junto would have received a salutary check. It is sufficient proof that such must have been the event, that the new administration was so weak, from the apathy of Townshend's friends, that it could, at first, scarcely struggle forwards; had they been in opposition it must have fallen. The possession of the power and emoluments of office soon, however, enabled Stanhope to withdraw many of these clients to himself, and he at length felt strong enough to discard their patron. The promptitude with which this was effected, can hardly be mentioned as an additional proof of Stanhope's jealousy of Townshend. Townshend's firmly established administration could afford to allow Sunderland to slumber in the cabinet, but Stanhope had need of all his patronage to secure active supporters. He appears to have become fully aware of this, after the division upon the vote of supply for the expected war with Sweden. Although both the Walpoles* appear among the speakers upon

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* Coxe is in error when he states that Walpole was silent upon this occasion. The parliamentary history mentions him among

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the ministerial side, they succeeded only by a majority of four. That same evening, the 9th of April, Stanhope notified to Townshend, in a letter of a few lines, that he was dismissed. It is said that the king's assent to this measure was obtained with great difficulty; and that all the representations of Stanhope, the endeavours of the German junto, and the persuasion of the Duchess of Kendall were in vain, until they succeeded in convincing him that the resignation of Walpole would not be a consequent. The next morning undeceived him. Walpole appeared to surrender his seals of office, and no entreaty could prevail upon him to retain them. That night he declared in the house of commons, that he was now only a country gentleman. With Walpole retired the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Orford, Paul Methuen, and William Pulteney. Strong indeed must have been the party which could afford to throw such men as these into opposition.

By the new arrangements consequent upon this defection, Stanhope became first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, Sunderland and Addison secretaries of state. The Duke of Bolton obtained the vacant lieutenancy of Ireland. The

the speakers, and, from the meagre he was less strenuous or less influential than usual.
account there given of the debate
there is no reason to conclude that

Duke of Newcastle succeeded Devonshire, as lord chamberlain. The Earl of Berkeley had Orford's post of first lord of the admiralty, and the Duke of Kingston was made privy seal.

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A glance at these creations will show, that what the Whig government now gained in unity they lost in talent. Addison, indeed, had been in himself a host, had the selection now made been for a society of essayists or poets ; but it was soon found that his talent for poetry was not available in the secretary's office, and the elegant writer was silent in the house of commons. The genius of the Whig party seemed to have passed away with the seceders ; it was only the names of Stanhope and Sunderland that gave respectability to the new cabinet.

CHAPTER V.

The Tories gradually less unanimous in support of the pretender—
 Bolingbroke's efforts to detach them from his cause—His letter to
 Sir William Wyndham—The Stanhope administration preserves the
 tolerant principles of the Whig party—The Whigs in opposition
 violate them—Death of the Earl of Shrewsbury—The Peerage bill—
 Coalition between Walpole and Sunderland—Death of Stanhope—
 The South Sea scheme.

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THE year 1717 produced no change in the situation of the Tory party, save that the assistance which they derived from the accession of the seceding Whigs enabled them to marshal forth a more respectable minority. The principles of the great body of the faction underwent, however, about this time, a very considerable modification. Nearly the whole party now began to consider the cause of the pretender desperate ; the Tories, as a body, ceased to hope, many had now ceased to wish for its success. Certain information as to the character of the man, for whom so many sacrifices had been made, had recently been obtained in England ; they learned, with indig-

nation, that those of their faction who had lost all in his service were treated with neglect, that his only councillors were priests, and that the only passport to his confidence was the recommendation of his confessor. The most intelligent of the Tories could no longer disguise from themselves that such a man could never be moulded into a Tory king; they could not but remark the Jesuitical equivocations which, even then, filled his manifestoes, and they must have had many misgivings, lest they should be compelled to join in expelling the prince they were then so eager to restore.

This gradual change was, doubtless, much assisted by the efforts of Bolingbroke, who, having been shamefully ill-used by this shadow of royalty, considered himself now free to warn his friends of the nature of the cause in which they were engaged, and of the disposition of the man in whose service they had enlisted. At the latter end of the former year, when Charles XII. of Sweden was preparing to take up the cause of the pretender, with that indomitable energy which so peculiarly characterized him, Bolingbroke had written to Wyndham, advising him to have nothing to do with the projected attempt, and alluding to similar communications which he had before transmitted.* This warning was not intended for his friend Wyndham alone. "The use to be made

* Coxe, vol. ii., p. 308.

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of this," he says, "ought to be as general as your concern for persons reaches." In furtherance of the design he had formed of undeceiving his party, and of separating them from a dangerous and unworthy cabal, Bolingbroke, during this year, drew up and despatched into England that elaborate statement of his conduct, while employed in the Jacobite interest, which I have already so largely quoted. Whether this letter was printed, and extensively distributed, is of no very great consequence. It appears from a memorandum, written in his own handwriting, upon the MS. yet extant, that it was drawn up in this year. We know that he was, at this time, in the habit of sending letters, having a similar object, both openly, through the post, and privately to Wyndham; and since this letter bears internal evidence of having been intended for immediate transmission, there can remain no shadow of a reason for doubting that it was sent and reached its destination. In that case, so great was Wyndham's veneration for Bolingbroke, that it would have been received as the command of his political chief; it would have rapidly circulated among the leaders of the party, and would thus have fully answered its intended purpose.

There is, however, great reason to believe, that this letter was printed upon its arrival in England. Bolingbroke was, it is well known, in the habit of privately printing those of his productions which he

intended for the immediate perusal of his friends. Thus, printed copies of his letters on history, and his idea of a patriot king, were in the hands of his friends long before they were known to the public. As these, however, were but sparingly distributed, and always under the implied condition that they were to be considered as MSS., they are now exceedingly rare. With the exception of a fragment of a copy of the letters on history, bound up with the Bolingbroke MSS., now in the British Museum, it would be difficult to point out the existence of any copy of the works which were only privately printed before his death, bearing a date anterior to 1752. No inference, therefore, is to be drawn from the absence of any such copies from our large libraries. The following extract from a letter from Bolingbroke to Lord Hardwicke, raises a strong presumption that the letter to Wyndham was printed, and therefore circulated: "The letter writ to Wyndham I found, and I send it with two others; one was writ to Lord Stair, on what he communicated to me from Lord Sunderland. His lordship took so little care of it, notwithstanding the caution given him in it, that, falling behind his scrutore, it was found by M. de Meziers, in whose house he had lived, and printed, as you see it, for reasons obvious enough." From this extract it is evident that, whether the letter to Wyndham was in print or not, it was well known to

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the Tory party, and, at a distance of twenty-seven years* from the time it was written, Harcourt might well have forgotten its contents; and Bolingbroke, amid his numerous removals and vicissitudes of fortune, might well require some search to discover a single copy.

Minute proofs to the same effect might be multiplied to a tedious extent. Horace Walpole, upon the appearance of the published edition of 1753, speaks of it in his correspondence, as the publication of the “famous letter” to Wyndham. The letter then was already famous. Chesterfield, who mentions with enthusiastic praise all the works of Bolingbroke as they appeared after his death, omits the letter to Wyndham, a circumstance inexplicable, except upon the supposition that he was already conversant with that work. Even Warburton, although no friend of Bolingbroke, and therefore far less likely to have received one of the private copies, had evidently read it: he speaks of it upon its appearance as “the curious and well written letter to Sir William Wyndham,” and adds in a postscript “I have looked over the letter to Sir William Wyndham, *it is castrated of one of its most curious anecdotes.*”† Another equally decisive circumstance is, that the answers to

* The letter to Hardwicke is dated Nov. 12, 1744. Coxe, vol. ii., p. 343.

† Letters from a late eminent prelate to one of his friends, p. 136.

this letter which issued from the press, immediately upon its publication, contain no word of suspicion that it was now heard of for the first time. How triumphant would have been the reply of the Jacobites, to the description which Bolingbroke gives of the court and character of the pretender, could they have alleged that this work was written only for posterity; that it was kept carefully concealed during the lifetime of the author, and was only intended to be read when all the actors in the scenes it described were dead; when no eye-witness should survive to refute its calumnies, or expose the mistatements which made up the author's elaborate defence. The most ignorant reviewer could not have overlooked so obvious and so crushing a reply: but the assailants of the letter to Wyndham drop no hint of such a suspicion. The best and most known of these answers is a tract called "Remarks on the late Lord Bolingbroke's famous Letter to Sir William Wyndham," a title which in itself proves, that the letter had long been known by report, for this answer appeared too quickly upon the publication of the letter, to allow us to suppose that its fame had been acquired by its publication. This writer commences his pamphlet by saying, "As I always had a very great regard for the late Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, I waited with impatience the publication of his letter to Sir William Wyndham. How am I disappointed,"

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 to 1721. &c. His knowledge of its existence, was evidently antecedent to its publication. And again, "The minister and not Lord Bolingbroke chose the other, [that is that Bolingbroke should earn his pardon by loading the pretender with bigotry, and the Duke of Ormond with incapacity, and not by becoming evidence or informer against his friends] which his lordship obliged himself to set about *directly*, and began to put it in execution, by writing this letter to Sir William Wyndham."* The Jacobite author of the Remarks concludes, that "this letter was wrote purely for the sake of gaining a permission to return to his native country, and to enjoy his paternal estate,"† a motive evidently inconsistent with the idea that the writer concealed the letter, which was to work this effect, until his death. These proofs render it almost demonstrable that the letter to Wyndham was extensively circulated among the Tory party soon after it was written.

But this inquiry is only important to our present purpose, so far as it discovers that the Tories were now fully aware of the weakness and wickedness of the Jacobite cause.‡

* Remarks on the late Lord Bolingbroke's famous letter to Sir William Wyndham, p. 12. history, as it relates to one of the most trusted and valuable historical authorities of the time. The

† Ibid., p. 24. mass of proof which is afforded by

‡ It is important also to general all contemporary literature, would

Recent circumstances had rendered this party more open to conviction upon this subject than they had hitherto been. A ray of promise now beamed through the hopeless despondency in which they had so long been sunk, and encouraged them to expect that at no distant period they might rise again into light, and obtain a monopoly of power even under the house of Hanover. The variance which had so long existed between the Prince of Wales and his son, now broke forth in a public quarrel. Enraged at the interference of the king in the choice of a godfather to one of his children, the prince gave vent to his indignation in words, and was immediately expelled the palace. The nation was now edified by a public disclosure of the domestic differences in the royal family. A rival court was established at Leicester House, and thither the Tory party resorted, setting at open defiance the monarch upon the throne, and avowing that they looked forward to his death as the advent of a Tory millennium.

The Whigs had nothing to hope from the crown

render this inquiry superfluous, had not a contrary opinion been expressed by a writer in a recent number of the Quarterly Review. Nor indeed would the speculations of this person who writes with ludicrous ignorance of the English language, and infantine simplicity as to the facts and authorities of history, be worthy of grave comment, but that I find they have been noticed elsewhere.

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when it should pass from the head of their present master; they attempted to establish a claim upon the gratitude of the people. Sunderland and Stanhope were true to the public principles which had always distinguished their party. No sooner were they established in power than they undertook the repeal of those persecuting statutes which the Tory ministry of Queen Anne had passed against the dissenters. The occasional Conformity act was so impolitic, as well as intolerant, that it was plainly intended rather to degrade the dissenters than to protect the church; and the Schism act, as it was called, which, in effect, withdrew from dissenting parents the control of the education of their children, was a flagrant violation of natural rights, and a blot upon the statute book of a free nation. These recent encroachments upon the principle of toleration the new cabinet resolved to abolish. The king and his chief ministers were even prepared to carry this principle much further. The repeal of the Test act was agitated in the council, and a scheme was debated by which even Roman Catholics should, under certain restrictions, be admitted to a participation of civil rights;* a bold experiment when a Catholic pretender

* There is, however, little evidence as to the extent of the relief projected, it probably extended only to "some liberty, and security for their religion."

was struggling towards the throne. These propositions were strictly in accordance with the principles avowed by the patriarchs of the party, who always spoke of penal statutes as temporary evils forced upon them by the necessity of the times; but they were far in advance of the spirit of the age; even the repeal of the Test act, after much consideration, was abandoned, Sunderland rightly observing that such an attempt would "ruin all."

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The scanty measure which was now proposed did not pass without violent opposition. In the lords the Archbishop of Canterbury inveighed loudly against the repeal of two acts, which formed "the bulwark and supporters of the established church," and he was strenuously supported by a great majority of his brethren on the bench, and by the lay Tory peers, headed by Lord Lansdowne. In the commons the members of the same party were no less vehement in their opposition; *they* laboured consistently in their vocation; but, to their eternal disgrace, Walpole and his friends appeared upon the same side; endeavouring, from the most paltry of motives, from personal pique and private resentment, to thwart an act of national justice. The parliamentary history affords no specimen of the arguments by which Walpole defended this vote. It must have been curious to hear a speech against the repeal of an act, which, when originally passed, the speaker had in-

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veighed against as a measure more worthy of Julian the Apostate, than of a Christian legislature. But such inconsistencies are so common in the lives of statesmen that they almost cease to excite disgust.

Meanwhile some alteration had taken place in the cabinet. Stanhope, having for some time held the post of chief, yielded it, as if by previous agreement, to Sunderland. He was now removed to the upper house, receiving an earldom together with the secretaryship. Sunderland became first lord of the treasury and president of the council; but the chancellorship of the exchequer, as it could not be held by a peer, was given to Aislachie. Lord Cowper also had resigned the great seal, and was succeeded by Parker, afterwards so unhappily notorious as the Earl of Macclesfield. Shrewsbury, who had acted so prominently, and in such varied characters, in the political drama, died in the year 1718, far more regretted by his private friends than by his political allies. This nobleman's mind was like his body, too delicate in its texture for the storms of a political life. His conduct seems to have been controlled by an extreme attachment to Protestantism, the faith of his adoption. His political prepossessions were those of a Whig, but he was often frightened from his party by the cry of "the church is in danger," and as often driven back by a discovery of the real danger which threatened it from the rashness of his temporary

allies. Add to this some allowance for the impulses of a mind morbidly sensitive to any thing bearing the semblance of a slight or insult, and we have a key to the inconsistencies in the life of this amiable nobleman, and to the career of this conscientious but vacillating politician.

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The next enterprise of the Whigs was one which can admit of no defence. It was an undisguised attempt to perpetuate the power of their faction, at the expense of the constitution. I allude to the Peerage bill which was, in 1719, introduced into the house of lords, and which, although for a short time abandoned, at length passed that assembly. The Whigs now possessed so decided a majority in the peers, that the only means by which the Tories could hope to carry on the government, upon the accession of the prince, was a large creation; and they did not conceal their intention of following the precedent which their own party had established in the reign of Queen Anne. Sunderland, aware that they would not scruple to put this threat into execution, prevailed upon the king to sanction a bill, by which the crown surrendered the right of unlimited creation. This, like the Septennial bill, was an efficient provision against an expected exigence; but, like that measure also, it established a certain and permanent change, as a provision against a contingent and temporary danger. The change, however, now proposed to be effected was infinitely

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less problematical than had been that of lengthening the duration of parliaments. The instances are comparatively rare in which irresponsible power has been trusted to an individual, and has been used with moderation; there is no instance of it having been possessed by a body of men without being abused. The constitution, therefore, had wisely reserved a power which, although not intended to be frequently or lightly resorted to, was of infinite value, since the knowledge of its existence would frequently prevent the necessity of its exercise. By this reservation an assembly, which the ends of the constitution required should not be acted upon by every breeze of popular feeling, was nevertheless controllable by the deliberately-expressed judgment of the nation. No rational monarch, at the risk of his throne, no rational minister, at the peril of his life, would dare to put violence upon this assembly, unless he felt that the house of peers, as then constituted, was plainly hostile to the sentiments of the great majority of the nation; and unless he felt that this majority were not acting from impulse which a moment might check, but from a deliberate conviction, which would ensure permanent approbation and support. Had this responsibility been destroyed the consequences would probably have been more fatal to the peers than to the country. When commoners could no longer look up to a seat

among them as an attainable object of honourable ambition, all sympathy for the order would quickly have died away ; when they beheld them, as they must have beheld them, in frequent collision with their representatives, having separate interests from the body of the nation, they would look upon them as a body permanently hostile to the whole untitled population of the kingdom. It would require only the recollection that there existed no constitutional means by which this spirit could be overcome, to suggest that where these had been found wanting, force had, heretofore, efficiently supplied the defect. A revolution, favoured by the great majority of the landholders, and the whole mercantile interest of a commercial country, could not fail of success. There can be little doubt that, had the Peerage bill succeeded, the popular indignation would ere long have swept away the house of lords.*

The honour of defeating this short-sighted measure is due to Walpole, although, from his recent conduct, we may be allowed to doubt whether his motives were as patriotic as his acts. It was he alone who prevailed upon the Whigs in opposition to exert themselves against a measure which came artfully recommended as a pledge of salvation to their

* The contest between Addison and Steele, the "old whig" and the "plebeian," was that which chiefly attracted the public attention during the agitation of this subject.

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party,* and it is generally admitted that it was his speech in the debate in the commons which decided the house to throw out the bill. It was rejected by the large majority of ninety-two.

The signal defeat of so important a ministerial measure discovers the slender tenure by which Sunderland held his office. His embarrassments increased so rapidly, that he was, at length, compelled to solicit a reconciliation with Walpole, who honourably declared, that the price of his co-operation must be the pardon of the prince whose confidence he had lately enjoyed. This was with much reluctance conceded; a reconciliation took place between the king and his son, and Walpole was gazetted as paymaster of the forces.

Although the seceders were thus recovered from the opposition, and the Whigs were apparently now a united party, the late opponents were no very strenuous supporters of Sunderland's administration. But many circumstances soon occurred to cause an alteration in the domestic arrangements of the governing faction. One of these was the death of Earl Stanhope, which occurred in February, 1721—a blow which entirely destroyed the predominance of that section of the Whigs, which had relied upon the personal favour of the monarch. That part of

* Speaker Onslow on the conduct of the Opposition.

the conduct of this illustrious statesman, which was degraded by the motive of personal aggrandizement, has been already animadverted upon with the severity which it appeared to merit. With this exception, however, his public life must always be regarded with admiration and gratitude by those who cherish those principles of civil liberty and religious toleration, which he so consistently advocated. His parliamentary career was that of a stanch Whig. He defended no abuses, because they were venerable to the vulgar eye from the rust of antiquity in which they were incrustated; he shrunk from no proposition which he thought of public benefit, because the voice of the crowd condemned it as an innovation; if he fixed his eye too steadily upon the pinnacle of political power to notice that his foot in climbing pressed upon a friend; when the height was obtained, although he leant upon a court to support him in his elevation, he used the influence it gave him with the disposition of a patriot. He was unfortunately a prominent supporter of the Peerage bill; this, although it derogates from his character as a statesman of extended views and comprehensive mind, is not incompatible with the purest intentions. He looked upon this measure as the only expedient against the early and permanent ascendancy of a faction which would quickly overturn the results of the persevering labour of thirty years.

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But a still greater event than the death of Stanhope was at hand. We are now arrived at the period when the explosion of the South Sea project spread consternation and ruin throughout the island. The cry which arose from the multitudes whose shadowy wealth was so suddenly changed into bankruptcy and destitution, hushed, for a moment, all political controversy. The immediate and personal interests now involved were too mighty to bow to the spirit of party. The national indignation raged with indiscriminating violence; the question was not now, Are the parties accused political friends or foes? it was, Are they, or are they not participators in the scheme by which we have been brought to ruin? Happily, amid the general contamination, the only man, whose well-tried financial talents could command confidence, was found irreproachable with any connexion with the cause of the misfortune. The public expectation was turned solely upon Walpole, nor was it disappointed. Whatever could, under the circumstances of the case, be effected, he performed. His proposals were approved by all parties, and so great was the influence he thereby attained that he was enabled to screen some of his colleagues, whose conduct, with relation to this transaction, had not been so pure as his own. Sunderland, his most dangerous rival, owed his escape entirely to Walpole's exertions; and although Aislachie's case was too flagrant for defence,

Walpole employed all his eloquence in palliation, and he was partially successful. The public confidence reposed in this able leader, and his fortunate freedom from any implication in this business, was, doubtless, the salvation of the Whigs. Had he not stood at the door of the cabinet and concealed the delinquencies it contained, the private avarice of a few individuals would have caused the ruin of the whole faction. The Tories would have been called into power, not because they, as a party, were unconnected with the transaction, but because a ministry could be selected from their body, which was so; while the actual Whig ministry was tainted by the delinquency of its leader.*

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* "Although the public voice criminated Sunderland, yet several extenuations may be urged in his favour. For it appears, from private documents, which have casually fallen under my inspection, that so early as July, he had refused to recommend to the directors any more lists for subscriptions, that he did not, at least, enrich himself or his friends; that he expressed great satisfaction that neither himself or his friends had sold out any South Sea stock, as he would not have profited by the public calamity."—*Coxe*, vol. i., p. 153.

CHAPTER VI.

Commencement of the Walpole administration—Disunion among the Whigs—Lord Carteret—Death of Sunderland—General election—Bishop Atterbury's plot—Death of Marlborough—Coalition between Bolingbroke and Pulteney—Causes of Pulteney's secession from his party—Change of the principles of Toryism from monarchical to aristocratic—The Craftsman—Objects of the contributors to that paper—Death of George I.

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THE odium which attached to Sunderland rendered it no longer possible for him to hold the office of chief minister of the crown. He resigned, but with great reluctance, and he abandoned his control over the secret service money with still greater. Who now could be chosen as his successor, but he to whom all classes had appealed in the recent distress? The Whigs were unanimous in intrusting the negotiation to Walpole, and the king, who placed an unbounded confidence in the abilities of this minister, willingly commissioned him to form a cabinet. In

April, 1721, Walpole became first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer; and that administration commenced its course, which, from its duration and its acts, forms so important a feature in the history of the factions. The influence of Walpole had been before apparent when, upon the death of Stanhope, he had been suffered to recommend Townshend as his successor in the secretaryship. The avowed hostility of the German courtiers, and even the personal dislike of the king had been then overcome. Reinstated in his old office, Townshend recovered all his wonted energy; and the perfect unity which must proceed from the relationship, friendship, and entire community of political views between the leaders of the government promised the happiest results. In others of his coadjutors Walpole was less fortunate. Sunderland had, indeed, ostensibly retired, but his private influence was still unimpaired. Lord Carteret remained secretary of state for the southern department, and forwarded in the cabinet those views which Sunderland, his leader, could only now advocate in the closet. Sunderland, Carteret, Carlton, and Cadogan were now the chief members of that section of the Whig party, which looked with disgust upon the ascendancy of Walpole and Townshend. Of these, after Sunderland, Carteret was certainly the most dangerous. This nobleman was an opponent of no ordinary abilities. He was esteemed

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to 1727. one of the most eloquent speakers in the house of lords ; he possessed a dignity of manner and propriety of elocution to enforce arguments which were not less convincing because they were clothed in the garb of a metaphorical diction. He was not more eloquent in the house of lords than he was assiduous and effective in the conduct of the details of office, and profound in his knowledge of the foreign relations of his country. His private accomplishments, as an elegant classic and an extensive linguist, endeared him to the king, and he appears to have been the only minister who could speak to the sovereign in his native tongue. Upon the schism in 1717, Carteret had attached himself to Sunderland and Stanhope ; to them he had been indebted for his elevation, and to their party he still continued faithful.

The endeavours of this section seem to have been now wholly directed to the expulsion of the present ministers from the cabinet, and to irritating the jealousy of the king against his son, their open enemy. There is some reason to believe, that in pursuing these objects, they intrigued for the restoration of the Tories, if not even for that of their king. Mr. Coxe* states upon the authority of the Walpole papers, that Sunderland made proposals to Bishop Atterbury, the

* Coxe's Memoirs of Walpole, vol. i., p. 165.

most strenuous leader of the decaying Jacobite faction. But to what point these extended we are not told; the idea of a restoration was at this moment a mere vision of madness, yet less could not have satisfied Sunderland's hatred, or favoured his ambition.

"He proposed," says the author, upon whose original information every writer upon this period must mainly rely, "at a time when the ferment occasioned by the South Sea scheme was at its extreme height, to dissolve the parliament; and induced the king to sanction his views, by persuading him that there was not money enough in the treasury to secure the return of a Whig majority, and that the Tories, under his influence would screen the projectors of the South Sea, and suppress all inquiry on the subject. The pretender and the Jacobites, certainly at this time entertained the most sanguine hopes. Sunderland became a great favourite with them and the Tories; his health was constantly drank by them, and they affected to be secure of attaining, by his means, the accomplishment of their wishes."* We must not however forget, that we are hearing the biographer of Walpole against his hero's rival. The argument attributed to Sunderland, discovers that corruption was already used as the ordinary and indispensable instrument of a ministerial majority.

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* Coxe's Memoirs of Walpole, vol. i., p. 165.

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 to 1727. It appears from Mr. Coxe's authorities, that Walpole did not oppose the proposition of his rival, solely by taking upon himself the charge of finding the sums necessary to procure a Whig house of commons. If this should be esteemed at all hazardous, he had resolved to take advantage of the dangerous precedent himself had assisted to make, and to propose a bill, by which the house of commons, which having been chosen for three years, had already sat seven, should prolong its own existence for a further period.*

Baffled in his last intrigue, Sunderland made another less direct attempt to destroy the influence of Walpole. Under the semblance of a desire to favour him, he requested the king to create him post-master-general for life, an office of great emolument, but which must have withdrawn him from parliament had he accepted it, while his refusal might probably have been resented by the king. George appears to have been by this time aware of his confidant's designs, and his answer was an inquiry whether Walpole had desired the appointment, or was acquainted with the application; upon receiving an answer in the negative, it is said that the king rejoined, "Do not, then, make him the offer, I parted with him once against my inclination, and I will never

* Sir John Brodrick to Lord Middleton. Coxe, vol. ii., p. 217.

part with him again as long as he is willing to serve me."*

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These intrigues were however all discomposed by the death of Sunderland, which occurred in April 1722; his death took place at a peculiarly critical moment, during the progress of the general election, when his countenance was peculiarly necessary to inspire the Tories with hope, and stimulate them to exertion. The disappointment they sustained when the result of the elections became known, and a large Whig majority appeared, probably produced what has generally been called Bishop Atterbury's plot, a conspiracy which was revealed to the English court before it could grow into maturity by the Duke of Orleans, who was glad of this opportunity to prove the sincerity of his professions to the reigning king.

Another circumstance which occurred between the dissolution of the old and the meeting of the new parliament, would, some years before, have changed the state of parties in England, and the politics of Europe. It now created but little sensation. This was the death of the Duke of Marlborough, who survived the Earl of Sunderland, his

* Mr. Coxe relates this anecdote upon the authority of a letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, July 31, 1731, for which he refers to the Appendix of his Memoirs, Correspondence, period III. There is, however, no such letter there. It was doubtless omitted by mistake.

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son-in-law, about a month, and who had been recently of infinitely less importance in the state. Since the accession of George I., Marlborough had been treated with great outward courtesy and real neglect. While levelling the colossal power of Louis XIV., and scattering and pursuing his armies, Marlborough had been so unreasonable as to postpone to the interests of Europe, the peculiar interests of the electorate of Hanover. This want of deference to the elector the King of England never could forgive. It was necessary to respect the national admiration, and to retain him in public employment; but he was allowed no particle of influence. So little was he consulted, even upon subjects supposed to be immediately under his control, that he was unable to nominate to a vacant lieutenancy. If he wished to obtain for another a favour from the crown, he was compelled to make the application through a private friend having less distinction and more influence; but “Don’t say it is for me, or you are sure to be refused,” was his invariable and necessary injunction.*

Disgusted by such unworthy treatment, and unable, after having ruled so absolutely in the court and cabinet, to recommence the arts of an expectant courtier, Marlborough retired entirely from public life. In the magnificent domain of Blenheim, the

* Coxe’s Walpole.

splendid testimonial of his country's gratitude, he could fly from the present to the future; he could anticipate the time when his name would still be familiar, and his deeds still fresh in the memory of all, when the acts of his contemporaries had ceased to interest, and their names were with difficulty remembered. Neither the neglect of a court, nor the more tormenting tyranny of an ignoble vice,* could render unhappy a man who had such a refuge. If, during the declining days of Marlborough, the present was dim and cheerless, he could, while reason yet remained, look back upon acts whose brightness even the treachery and meanness of Lord Churchill could not destroy, and forward into fields of time, where his glories should only be more widely diffused, as the deeds whence they radiated became more distant.

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As a political chief, we have seen Marlborough the leader and mainstay of each party alternately. In this character we must record his acts, but it would be vain to attempt to trace them to any principles of government. The early part of his life was spent in working out the fortune of a courtier; so long as he strove only to attain this object, or to preserve it when attained, he continued a Tory. His manhood

* Avarice is not a vice likely to be eradicated by age, Marlborough was involved in continual disputes with his workmen at Blenheim.

CHAP. VI. was spent in building up the fame of a soldier. War—
 A. D. 1721 the prostration of France—was his object, and, as the
 to 1727. Whigs alone were heartily inclined to second him in
 this, Marlborough became a Whig. I believe it was
 the bitter hatred he conceived for Oxford, the perse-
 cution he suffered from the Tories, and the controlling
 influence of the masculine mind of his duchess,
 strong, even when yoked with that of a hero, that
 preserved his party consistency. I can remember
 no proof that he was ever governed by any theoretical
 preference for a peculiar principle of government.

For some short time previously to his death, the
 duke had offered a sad spectacle to those who could
 remember him as he once was. He, who in the
 words of Bolingbroke, had been “the fixed important
 centre which united in one common cause the prin-
 cipal states of Europe, who broke the power of
 France when raised the highest, when exerted the
 most, rescued the empire from desolation, asserted and
 confirmed the liberties of Europe,”* lay a wretched
 wreck of humanity, sunk into a hopeless state of
 mental imbecility.

Marlborough died on the 16th of June, 1722.
 The discovery of the Atterbury plot, induced Wal-

* Inscription upon the pedestal Bolingbroke, at the request of
 of the monument at Blenheim. the duchess.—Memoirs of Lord
 This inscription was written by Bolingbroke.

pole to call the parliament together in October. Again, an occasion occurred in which extraordinary circumstances required extraordinary measures. It was necessary at any expense to crush the hopes of the Jacobite conspirators, and since the evidence was too defective to bring them within the power of the ordinary courts of justice, moral certainty was substituted for judicial conviction, and bills of pains and penalties passed against the notorious offenders. Under one of these, Atterbury, the classical and eloquent but guilty Bishop of Rochester, was sentenced to deprivation and perpetual banishment.* It affords a curious instance of party infatuation scarcely credible, that this able and learned prelate, striving as he was to place a Catholic upon the throne,

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* It furnished a subject for the humour of Swift, that the proof upon which the secret committee chiefly relied, as connecting Atterbury with certain treasonable documents, resulted from an accident that happened to a little spotted dog, called Harlequin. Some of the persons examined, admitted that this dog was sent over from France, as a present to Mrs. Atterbury, and some of the intercepted letters mentioned it as sent to the fictitious name, which it was before suspected applied to Atterbury in the treasonable correspondence.

“ Now let me tell you plainly, sir,

Our witness is a real cur,

A dog of spirit for his years,

Has twice two legs, two hanging ears,

His name is Harlequin, I wot,

And that's a name in every plot :” &c.

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was nevertheless himself as strenuous a Protestant as he was a Jacobite. Atterbury had no intention of changing his faith, whether he held it from conviction, which many have doubted, or as a point of honour, which some have affirmed. While attached to the service of the pretender and dead to England, Atterbury still retained and defended his religion; he spoke in language of indignant contempt of those exiles, who purchased by a change of creed the favour of the pretender, and he lost no opportunity of discountenancing Catholicism even in its stronghold. It is necessary to remember the career of this man of high and cultivated intellect and unbending spirit, to enable us to credit that a Protestant party could have striven with such constancy for a Catholic king.

The minute changes which are brought about by the unintermitting agency of court intrigue, so long as they only affect individuals, are rather the subjects of a memoir writer, than portions of a history in which the progress and triumph of principles are the objects of illustration. I pass over, therefore, the long and intricate contest which was carried on between Carteret, at the head of the remnants of the Sunderland section, and Walpole and Townshend. It ended in the discomfiture of Carteret, who received an honourable banishment from court, as lord lieutenant of Ireland. I am not called upon to follow

Carteret to Ireland, and detail the contest which occupied that island upon the subject of Wood's patent, an instrument of opposition which was seized upon with desperate hardihood, and to which the humour and bold mendacity of Swift gave unhoped for effect. I have little either to remark upon the English department of the domestic policy of the Whig ministry during the remainder of this reign. They were too strong against the Tories to dread any attacks from that party, or to invite any attempt upon their places; they were too weak in themselves, too disunited in the cabinet, and too jealous at court, to plan any great design, or propose any further legislative recognition of any principle of their party. In their foreign policy they were watchful of that Protestant succession, of which they were the peculiar guardians. The cabinets of Vienna and Madrid, having settled their differences, proposed to celebrate their reconciliation by a common crusade upon England. The crushed hopes of the unfortunate Stuart again budded; the barbarian power of Russia acceded to the league, and it was declared at Madrid that, in a very short time, it would be criminal to speak of George I. as the king of England. But the Whigs prevented the storm; the treaty of Hanover, by uniting England, France, and Prussia, in a strict defensive alliance, put an end to the project.*

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* Coxe's Life of Walpole, and Correspondence.

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The Tories, meanwhile, had gained very considerably by the restoration of Bolingbroke to his country. They had now obtained a leader of consummate talent and matured experience ; a veteran in all the arts of state intrigue and party warfare ; one who, himself unable to mingle in the parliamentary contests, could with cooler attention direct the movements of others.

But it was not only in tactics and strategy that the Tories gained by the return of Bolingbroke ; his co-operation produced an immediate and powerful influence upon the principles of that party, and removed from them the most odious of their reputed crimes. No one could now attribute to Bolingbroke any taint of Jacobite predilection. He, who had been attainted by the pretender, who had bid the whole body of Jacobites defiance, and was in return inveighed against as a recreant traitor and their bitterest foe ; who, stung by unmerited insult, flung all the scorn and hatred of his own fiery spirit upon them and their cause, could never be supposed to act with men who looked forward to the restoration of the Stuart dynasty. In abandoning the pretender, Bolingbroke had abandoned the principle of the old Tory party ; he was compelled, at the same time, formally to surrender the old doctrines of divine right and absolute monarchy. These rusty tenets had hitherto only been withdrawn from view—when Bolingbroke under-

took to separate the Tories from the Jacobites they were brought forth to be derided and disavowed. From this time the principle of that party has been rather aristocratical than monarchical. They descended from the post they had held as the guards of an unconstitutional throne, and became merely the enemies of all popular institutions. They abandoned the hopeless cause of royalty, and addressed themselves to win back its spoil from the people, that they might monopolize it themselves. There has, of course, been since then individuals, and even classes, which remained steadfast to the old principle of Toryism; but henceforward we never find the Tory party struggling to extend the prerogative of the crown.

This change was forced upon the party by circumstances, but it was Bolingbroke who first saw the necessity, and boldly altered his course to meet it. Yet so unsupported was this great man when rejected by the pretender, and so coldly was he at first looked upon by the Tories,* that had Sunderland or

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* "The Tories," he says, in his letter to Wyndham, "have not, indeed, impeached nor attainted me, but they have done, and still are doing, something very like to that which I took worse of the Whigs than the impeachment and attainder. From our enemies we expect evil treatment of every sort; we are prepared for it, and we sometimes triumph in it; but when our friends abandon us, when they wound us, and when they take to do this on an occasion when we stand the most in need of their support, and have the best title to it, the firmest mind finds it hard to resist."

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Walpole, when they found him without a political faith, tempted him with the offer of an entire restoration, he might, notwithstanding his high sense of party honour, have been brought over to the Whigs. Bolingbroke would have remarked, with truth, that his party had abandoned him, not he his party. Had he made this change he would have done no violence to his principles, for these were always of a very convenient laxity; but his ambition was so ungovernable, and so well known, that no minister could hope to find in him a subservient ally, nor would any one seek to introduce so dangerous a rival. This was, doubtless, the reason that Sunderland delayed and Walpole opposed his pardon;* and that the latter minister haughtily rejected the offer of a coalition between Bolingbroke and the Tories he could influence, and the Whigs. Owing his partial restoration entirely to the exertions of his wife, the influence of his private friends, and the purchased advocacy of the Duchess of Kendal, Bolingbroke returned to England in 1725, resolved to make the minister who had refused his alliance feel his vengeance.

The conjuncture was highly advantageous to his views. At this time Pulteney had recently, from private motives of disgust, seceded from the ministry. So early as the negotiation between Walpole and

* Tindal. Mr. Coxe labours in vain to prove that Bolingbroke was guilty of ingratitude in his opposition to Walpole.

Sunderland, which ended in a reconciliation between the king and the prince, and the return of Walpole and his friends to office, the seeds of discontent had been sown in Pulteney's mind. During the course of Pulteney's opposition, in answer to an eulogistic notice of him in the *Craftsman*, a somewhat abusive pamphlet issued from the press, attacking the motives of his conduct. The object of this abuse replied in a powerful pamphlet, which he called "An Answer to one part of a late infamous Libel, intituled 'Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two honourable Patrons.'" Speaking of himself in the third person, and addressing Walpole as the author of the attack upon him, Pulteney gives the following account of the secret history of the schism: "He avers, upon his honour, that you sent to him one day, as he was going out of town, desiring to speak with him, that when he came you told him of the reconciliation between the late king and the then Prince of Wales, and that a bargain was made for those Whigs who had resigned their employments to be put in again by degrees. To this the gentleman replied, 'Who, pray, is it that hath had authority to make this bargain?' Your answer was, 'I have done it with the ministry, and it was insisted on that nobody but Lord Townshend should know of the transaction. Neither Lord Cowper, the speaker, nor any one else, knew it; and, therefore, we hope you

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will not take it amiss that it was kept secret from you.'—'Not I,' said the gentleman, 'but I think it very odd that any one should presume to take a plenary authority upon himself, to deal for such numbers as were concerned in an affair of this consequence.'—'We have not,' said you again, 'had our own interests alone in view. We have bargained for all our friends, and in due time they will be provided for.' You named several who were to come into employments, and said to this gentleman, 'We know, sir, that you do not value any thing of that kind; so we have obtained a peerage for you.' It seems that you did not, at that time, pretend that the gentleman either expected or insisted on any employment, and therefore told him, that the king had consented to make him a peer. To this, the gentleman replied, with some warmth, 'Sir, if ever I should be mean enough to submit to being sold, I promise you, that you shall never have the selling of me. A peerage is what, some time or other, I may be glad of accepting for the sake of my family; but I will never obtain it by any base method, or submit to have it got for me upon such terms by you.'"^{*} But Pulteney, although he privately attempted to prevent the acquiescence of the prince in the arrangement,[†] did not forsake his party. He supported Walpole and

^{*} Answer to one part of a late infamous libel, &c., p. 55. [†] Ibid., p. 57.

Townshend, and received from them the place of cofferer of the household, a reward which rather restrained his immediate opposition, than satisfied his expectations. Upon the discovery of the Atterbury plot, Pulteney was chairman of the secret committee, and acquitted himself with great vigour and talent; but after the first misunderstanding, no cordiality ever existed between him and the ministers. His disgust continually increased, until it became known that he only sought an opportunity for an open rupture. Walpole discovered, too late, the danger of alienating so powerful a debater. He took an occasion of remarking, that whenever a vacancy should occur in either of the secretaryships, the ministry intended to recommend him to the office; but it was now too late: Pulteney only replied by a bow and a smile, and abandoning the distant prospect of promotion, threw himself into the ranks of the opposition. By making his first essay against the payment of the debts which had accrued upon the civil list, an affair personal to the sovereign, he cut away all means of retreat, and placed himself in open hostility to the present king.

It is evident, that the opposition of Pulteney was prompted only by personal disappointment, and by enmity to a minister who, he thought, had underrated his services; but this did not render it less dangerous; he was always Walpole's most bitter and dreaded enemy.

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This secession occurred about the time of Bolingbroke's arrival in England; and the veteran intriguer no sooner found that he was not likely to succeed with Walpole, than he assiduously cultivated the alliance of the discontented Whig. These old antagonists soon became cordially united in the pursuit of their common object, the destruction of Walpole's administration; and they pursued that object with no less vigour because their ulterior views were less consentient. The question of the division of spoil was deferred until the enemy had been slain.

Such leaders as these, one of whom enjoyed the reputation of an intrepid Tory, and had governed the party in its days of success, could not but have an almost despotic power over their factions. Pulteney was, indeed, only an auxiliary Whig, but Bolingbroke was a Tory, and to him they might trust their principles as well as their conduct. On the 5th of Dec., 1726, was published the first number of a paper which was established to represent the sentiments of the new united opposition, and which, under the conduct of Bolingbroke and Pulteney, soon acquired extensive popularity, by its furious abuse of the existing administration, and its daring use of the usual topics of opposition. It was useless to profess loyalty when the king upon the throne was the professed patron of their opponents, and when no hope appeared of a monarch more favourably disposed; the Craftsman,

therefore, treated the rights of princes with little ceremony, and even ventured to canvass with severity some of the acts of the Stuarts. It was the present policy of the party to purge themselves from the accusation of being Jacobites, and they had no reason to exalt the kingly power now that it was vested in the house of Hanover. The sentiments of the Craftsman cannot be cited as the sentiments either of Whigs or Tories. A great number of the papers were written, or at least dictated, by Pulteney,* who, although in alliance with the Tories, frequently and publicly reiterated that he never had and never would abandon the principles of the Whigs.

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The Tories, in deference to their more popular allies, and knowing that Whig principles were the more adapted for opposition, declined the assertion of their own peculiar tenets; and the Craftsman, fettered by no creed of principles, became the instrument for strengthening and preserving the unity of the two parties. The following extract, from one of its early numbers, will show how openly and steadily this object was pursued :

“ Every body knows that, for near a century past,

* Horace Walpole in his Correspondence, has related that Francklin, the printer of the Craftsman, denied that Pulteney ever contributed any thing more than hints to that periodical. But we have the authority of Bishop Newton, the chaplain to the Earl of Bath, to the contrary.

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this kingdom hath been almost continually agitated with contentions; occasioned by mutual jealousies and uneasinesses between the prince and the people, for liberty on one side and the prerogative on the other; in which also religion has been not a little concerned. These disputes, which have divided the nation into two great factions, and brought about several wonderful revolutions in our government, seem at present to be, in a great measure, terminated by the firm establishment of the Protestant succession against all attempts to defeat it, and by the general affection of the people to his majesty's person, family, and government.

“Notwithstanding this, the names of distinction are still kept up, when our differences are so generally reconciled; and we preserve the same bitterness, hatred, and animosity against each other, whilst we are in the *same interest* and pursue the *same end* as when we professed contrary views and took measures diametrically opposite.

“If you ask a Whig for his opinion of a Tory, he'll tell you, in general, that he is a Jacobite or a papist; a friend to arbitrary government, and against the liberties of the people, both in church and state.

“Take the character of a Whig, in like manner, from a Tory, and you will hear him described to be a man of republican principles; a presbyterian, and a sworn enemy to the church of England and the regal

prerogative; nay, it will be well for him if he is not set forth as a downright atheist or libertine, and an enemy to all government whatever.”*

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How uniform have been the mutual accusations of the two parties! take from the Tory character the epithets which arose from their connexion with the now extinct house of Stuart, and we find the terms of party abuse, which were fashionable under George I., in undiminished estimation under William IV.

But the writer in the *Craftsman* proceeds in his task; he shows that neither party avows the principles attributed to it by its opponent, and although he admits that the Tory ranks contain Jacobites, he *hopes* that they are inconsiderable in numbers, and more so in riches and strength. “What, therefore, is to be wished,” he continues, “in our present circumstances is, that all persons, however distinguished by party appellations, who are truly in the interest of the present government, and desire the continuance of it, would consolidate themselves into a body, and unite in measures against the common enemies of their country, whether *foreign* or *domestic*; that they would forget all their former unreasonable animosities, and whilst they are equally exerting their endeavours to accomplish the same end, viz., the happiness of their country, that they would not quarrel

* *Craftsman*, No. 40.

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one with another about any differences in judgment concerning the means.

“Let the true sons of the church, and especially the clergy, lay aside all unnecessary fears or apprehensions of its danger; and content themselves with those rights, immunities, and powers with which the law hath invested them, without endeavouring to stretch them any further. Let the Protestant dissenter acquiesce, under that toleration and those privileges with which the legislature hath thought fit to indulge him. Let the Whig enjoy his liberty and property in its fullest latitude, without reproaching the Tory as an enemy to both; and let the Tory, in his turn, drop all his bitterness and malevolence against the Whig, as disaffected to monarchy and religion; or rather, let the very names of Whig and Tory be for ever buried in oblivion.”*

This necessity of waving all agitation of principles, and breaking down the partition which separated Whigs from Tories, in order to form a strong body in opposition, was well understood by the leaders and constantly observed. Hence the continual allusions to the baneful effects of party spirit which occur throughout the political writings of Bolingbroke. The whole series of letters in the *Craftsman*, which was afterwards published under the title of a “Disser-

tation on Parties," is avowedly but an elaborate essay to prove this then necessary doctrine. "There is no complaint which hath been more constantly in the mouths, no grief hath lain more heavily at the hearts of all good men, than those about our national divisions; about the spirit of party, which inspires animosity and breeds rancour; which hath so often destroyed our inward peace, weakened our national strength, and sullied our glory abroad. It is time, therefore, that all who desire to be esteemed good men, and to procure the peace, the strength, and the glory of their country by the only means by which they can be procured effectually, should join their efforts to heal our national divisions, and to change the narrow spirit of party into a diffusive spirit of public benevolence."

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"Wicked and unhappy men!" he says of those who would oppose this union, "who seek their private safety in opposing public good. Weak and silly men! who vainly imagine that they shall pass for a nation, and the nation for a faction; that they shall be judged in the right, and the whole body of the people in the wrong! How long do they imagine that so unequal a contest can last?"*

No contrast can be greater than that between Bolingbroke's public acts and published writings.

* Dissertation on Parties. Letter I.

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One of the most notorious characteristics of the administration to which he belonged, was its imposition of the newspaper tax, and its systematic oppression of the political printers and writers ; yet the first subject handled in the paper published under his control, is the liberty of the press. Another very prominent act of his administration was the persecution of the dissenters, and the aggrandizement of the established hierarchy ; yet more than the half of the volumes, in which his works are comprised, are filled with attempts to prove that this establishment is a corporation of knaves, and the religion it professes, a fable. Yet, in the political works of Bolingbroke, no such inconsistencies occur. Happily for himself, during his days of open Toryism, he had written nothing upon general principles of government ; had an essay upon this subject proceeded from his pen at that time, we should have discovered in it no denunciations of the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience as principles “such as would shock the common sense of a Samojede or a Hottentot.”* If the recent revolution warned him against their bold defence, they would have, at least, received the respect of a minister who owed his power to his predecessors’ prosecution of Sacheverell. But Bolingbroke, now writing anonymously for a motley party, wore the

* Dissertation on Parties. Letter II.

mask of the more popular section. He put forth the principles of Pulteney and his friends as those of the whole party; concealed, under the mantle of the Whig leader, the antipopular tenets of Toryism, and declared to the nation that they had ceased to exist. Meanwhile, the less accommodating partisans looked on in silence, content with the working of any artifice which promised them a restoration to power.

Such was the situation of the two factions in the year 1727, when the death of George I. occurred, and roused, for a moment, all the hopes and fears of each.

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CHAPTER VII.

Conduct of George II. upon his accession—Sir Spencer Compton—Strength of the Walpole government—Character of the king—His mistress—The queen—Her power over the king—Walpole continues in office.

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SINCE the reconciliation which had been effected by Walpole, between the prince who now ascended the throne and George I., although there had been little cordiality, there had been no open hostility between the father and the son. The prince had taken no part in politics, but had lived in a secluded manner at Leicester House. His chief friends had been the Earl of Scarborough, his master of the horse, and Sir Spencer Compton, his treasurer; and although Pulteney, and seven of his friends, had been frequent visitors, and were well received, it was never supposed that the prince participated in any of the opposition cabals. The expectations of Pulteney and Bolingbroke were, nevertheless, highly excited by

the news of the king's death, since their recent attempts to infuse into the mind of the prince a dislike to Walpole had been so successful, that some of his attendants had heard him declare, that that minister's tenure of office should cease with his accession. He had even given out that he designed his friend, Sir Spencer Compton to be Walpole's successor, and those who were acquainted with the exact relations of the different political interests well knew that such a selection could not be made or supported without being followed by very important consequences.

Sir Spencer Compton, whom George II. had thus chosen by anticipation to be his minister, was a man who laid claim to no brilliant parts; he was the leader of no particular section of politicians, nor, indeed, had he ambition to attempt or abilities to manage the formation of a separate party. He possessed no superiority in debate, but he was assiduous, exact, and methodical in business; and these qualities recommended him to a prince who, minutely regular in the management of his personal affairs, looked upon exactitude and application as the chief essentials in a minister. Compton's public life had been that of a consistent Whig; he had distinguished himself among that party so early as the prosecution of Sacheverell, and had been one of the managers of the impeachment against that ecclesiastic. His zeal had been

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rewarded with several lucrative appointments, and among others, with the speakership of the house of commons, a situation for which, by the nature of his talents, he was eminently qualified, and to which he was elected without opposition.

From a passage in that pamphlet, by Pulteney, that has been already quoted, it appears probable, that Pulteney had caused or increased the new king's dislike of Walpole, by repeating, and perhaps exaggerating, for the man who would repeat, would not hesitate to exaggerate, a conversation said to have taken place between him and Walpole at the time of the accommodation between Walpole and Sunderland. In his pamphlet, Pulteney professes to have been particularly tenacious of the interests of the prince. He says he asked, "What are the terms you have made for the prince, who hath acted so honourable and steady a part to those with whom he engaged, and who are now in opposition to the court? To this you answered with a sneer, 'Why he is to go to court again, and he will have his drums and his guards and such fine things.' At this the gentleman was astonished, and thought proper to press you a little further, by asking you whether the prince was to be left regent again, as he had been when the king went out of England. 'No,' said you, 'why should he? he does not deserve it, we have done too much for him,

and if it was to be done again we would not do so much.'”*

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Such a conversation, reported to the subject of it, was well calculated to raise a bar to Walpole's employment under George II., which nothing but necessity could overcome. Walpole was aware of this, and is said to have remarked to a Sir George Yonge, “ I must soon go out, but (he added, knowing his own strength) let me recommend you not to go into violent opposition, for we must soon come in again.”†

The confidence of Walpole was by no means without foundation. With him he well knew would retire Townshend, Devonshire, and Newcastle, and against the interests of these powerful leaders, Compton might despair of obtaining a majority in favour of any Whig ministry he might form. The formation of a coalition government from the coalesced opposition, was an enterprise of no less difficulty. It now became evident that the Utopian dreams of the annihilation of party spirit, substantial and philosophical as these appeared in the stately cadences of Bolingbroke, were utterly incapable of realization. Pulteney took a pride in declaring that he was still a Whig; and he never intended to become a member

* Answer to the remarks on the Craftsman's vindication. † Coxe's Life of Walpole.

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of a Tory government. The nation was not prepared for a government of Tories, headed by Bolingbroke, nor, indeed, had the king any intentions in favour of that party. It was some time since his reconciliation with his father had freed him from reliance upon them, and like Pulteney's, his connexion with them had been produced rather by necessity than choice.

Yet notwithstanding these difficulties, which must beset the path of the minister, the palace was rife with intrigues, elaborately woven by the different candidates for office. The new king was a man slow in forming a decision, but of indomitable obstinacy in maintaining that which he had once formed. Two channels were open through which it was supposed he might be influenced—his queen and his mistress. George's favourite mistress was Henrietta Howard, the wife of a younger son of the Earl of Suffolk, and afterwards, by the succession of her husband to the title, Countess of Suffolk. Mrs. Howard had, some years before, accompanied her husband to Hanover, and she there became bed-chamber-woman to Caroline, then electoral princess. In this capacity she returned with her mistress to England, and becoming thus also known to the prince, she was employed by him to plead his cause with Miss Bellenden, the reigning beauty of the day, and afterwards Duchess of Argyle. Mary Bellenden, however, was insensible

to the solicitations of a phlegmatic admirer, whose gallantry was so little equal to his impatience, that he was compelled to procure a substitute to declare his passion. It appears to have happened, when Mrs. Howard was detailing to him her ill success, that he discovered that she also was a beautiful woman, and as she was not so cruelly blind to the merits of a prince as Mary had proved, he soon forgot his late disappointment in his present success. In the works of Swift, Pope, and Gay, we find encomium upon this lady which would lead us to suppose that her accomplishments were as great as her interest was thought to be potent. Pope describes her* to Swift in such a manner, that the dean could only supply a name to the description by a reference to the mythology, whence he pronounced it to be riches.† But his friend replies, “ Gay puts his whole trust at court in that lady whom I described to you, and whom you take to be an allegorical creature of fancy. I wish she really were riches for his sake; though, as for yours, I question whether, if you knew her, you would change her for the other.”‡ Swift did very soon afterwards know her, and attempted, through her influence to have his deanery in Ireland exchanged for some preferment in England. It appears, from the correspondence between this lady

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* Pope's Works, by Wharton,
vol. ix., p. 51.

† Ibid., vol. ix., p. 55.

‡ Ibid., vol. ix., p. 58.

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and Swift, that she was afflicted with deafness and great weakness of sight. Swift writes to her in his own style of coarse, humorous, flattery. In one of his letters he considers his deafness an honour, since it enables him to resemble her in his calamities. "You boast," he says, "that your disorders never made you peevish. Where is the virtue, when all the world was peevish on your account, and so took the office out of your hands? Whereas I bore the whole load myself, nobody caring three pence what I suffered, or whether I was hanged or at ease." Another extract from these letters exemplifies, in an amusing manner, the opinion generally entertained of Mrs. Howard's influence and the court that was paid to her.

"There, are, Madam, thousands in the world who, if they saw your dog use me kindly, would, the next day in a letter, tell me of the delight they heard I had in doing good; and being assured that a word of mine to you would do any thing, desire my interest to speak to you to speak to the speaker to speak to Sir Robert Walpole to speak to the king.*

"One place I humbly beg for myself, which is in

* Swift never hints at the probability of Mrs. Howard being the mistress of the king; he, therefore, supposes that she could only thus circuitously forward a petition. The dignitary of the church, however anxious to obtain an English preferment, could not *avow* that it was to be the reward of a double adultery.

your gift, if it be not disposed of: I mean the
 perquisite of all the letters and petitions you receive,
 which, being generally of fair, large, and strong
 paper, I can sell to good advantage to the bandbox
 and trunk makers, and, I hope, will annually make a
 comfortable penny.”*

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But, notwithstanding all the complimentary effusions of courtier poets, Mrs. Howard was only a pretty woman. There is no reason to assert that she wished to do mischief; but, if she did, she had no talent to accomplish her wish.

Queen Caroline was a woman of masculine mind and very considerable acquirements — advantages which frequently render a woman rather formidable than attractive—and particularly dangerous in the wife of a man who was acutely sensitive to any thing bearing the semblance of dictation, jealous of his authority, and dogged in his resolves. But Caroline had the good sense to conceal her ambition under a feminine submission to the authority of her husband; her arts were only those of persuasion, and, while George resolved and acted, it was she who influenced his mind, supplied him arguments, and suggested his resolutions.

Caroline's character has been drawn with great severity by some of her contemporaries, and particu-

* Swift to Mrs. Howard, July 9, 1727.

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larly by Chesterfield, who had suffered from the loss of her favour, and who had incurred that loss by a gross breach of policy, and even of politeness, which we little expect to meet in the life of so great a master of courtly conduct. The queen had, doubtless, many of the weaknesses of a learned lady. We cannot notice, without a smile and a suspicion of affectation, her great affection for metaphysics ; nor can all the eulogy of Doctor Clarke divert the ridicule which attached to her when she assumed the place of arbitress in the contest which was carried on between that profound divine and Leibnitz. But whatever might have been her skill in the abstract sciences, and however much or little she was capable of judging the merits of Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries, and the influence they had upon the evidences of Christianity, her judgment upon the more practical points of government was generally sound, and uniformly moderate. Although supreme in a council of contending divines, and authoritative at a conference of disputing philosophers, she was modest and unassuming in the closet. She always declared that she knew nothing of business, gave her opinion with apparent reluctance, and seemed to decline the power she loved, even at the moment that she exercised it.

At the time of the death of George I. no one suspected the power she possessed over her husband ;

no party had made their court to her, and even Compton, numerous as were his opportunities of observation, had ventured to treat her with disrespect. The Whigs in office appear either to have trusted to their political strength, and the occasional obligations they had rendered to the prince, or to have despaired of gaining his personal favour. Pulteney and his friends, and Bolingbroke and the Tories, had been assiduous in their attentions to Mrs. Howard, and thought themselves, through her, secure at court. It was natural for men who had received from their fathers traditions of the court of Charles II., and who had themselves lived in that of George I., to look upon the mistress as the monopolizer of all power, and upon the wife as a cipher; but in this they entirely miscalculated the disposition of George and the talents of his queen. George II. was fond of women, and he indulged his passion, but he never broke through the decorum that was due to his wife. He had seen too clearly the ill effects that followed the indolent acquiescence of his father in the corrupt solicitations of his mistress, and he was warned by the example. It soon became apparent that Mrs. Howard had little influence in dispensing the most humble scraps of patronage, and none at all to direct the state appointments. The queen, in pursuance of her usual policy, made no open complaint of the infidelity of her husband; she received his mistresses

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at court, and even treated them with a simulated cordiality ; perhaps she acknowledged to herself that the ravages which, since her marriage, the smallpox had made in her beauty formed *his* excuse ; but she revenged herself by opposing the preferment of every person who openly made the favour of the mistress the foundation of their hopes. Thus it was that Gay, once her favourite, remained unpensioned ; that Swift continued till death dean of St. Patrick's, declaring, at last, when tired of his unrewarded adulation, that Lady Suffolk was a mere courtier ;* thus it was also that Pulteney and Bolingbroke now remained in opposition, and Walpole remained minister.

When Walpole awakened George II. from his sleep, to tell him that he had commenced to reign, his answer was an abrupt command to send for Compton, to prepare the usual declaration to the council. Walpole obeyed, and had the mortification to hear this friend of the prince named as his successor. Compton was, however, unequal to the emergency, and he had sense enough to know his insufficiency. While the necessary negotiations were

* When this was told the countess she mildly observed, that the dean had once written to her a very different description of her character. This lady fell very suddenly into great disgrace with the poets and writers of the day ; they accused her of insincerity in her promises ; she acutely felt the want of power to perform them.

proceeding, the queen, who had heard from the late king frequent allusions to Walpole's skill in finance,* appears to have communicated with that minister. Sir Spencer Compton had only dared to promise her a jointure of £60,000 a year upon the king's death; Walpole now boldly guaranteed her £100,000, and offered, moreover, to carry in the house of commons a vote for an augmentation of £130,000 to the civil list. This promise, together with the dislike she entertained for Compton, decided the queen in Walpole's favour; and the offer of the addition to the civil list, the admitted incapacity of Compton, and the well-known affection of the Whigs for their present leader, supplied her with cogent arguments. The promise already given to Compton was now the only obstacle; but, this being willingly remitted,† Walpole was continued minister. The cabinet remained, with slight variation, as it was, the hopes of the opposition were entirely blighted, and Bolingbroke left London.

* Caroline was accustomed to tease George I. a great deal about politics, and their conversations upon this subject were often held in chapel, where they constantly met. Upon one occasion she remarked, that he would be obliged to disband his Hanover troops, for there were no funds to pay them. "No," replied her father, "I shall not; Walpole could turn these stones into gold." Minutes of a Conversation with Mr. Scrope.—Etough Papers.

† Minutes of a Conversation with Mr. Scrope.—Etough Papers.

CHAPTER VIII.

A general election—A Whig majority returned—Onslow—Success of the Whigs in the house of commons—Charge against Walpole, that he governed by corruption—The motives that prompted the charge—Its truth—Necessity of corruption to the Whigs as an instrument of government—Causes of that necessity—Effect of the change in the Tory principles of government upon the house of commons—Power of influencing that assembly possessed by the earlier sovereigns—Wrested from them by the people—The Tory aristocracy recover it for themselves—Influence of the Tories opposed by the money of the Whigs—Debates upon the item for secret service money.

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AT the meeting of the parliament, Walpole performed his part of the bargain he had made, when he proposed that the entire revenues of the civil list, amounting to about £800,000 should be settled upon the new king for life. Shippen alone opposed the motion. This intrepid Jacobite boldly censured the expenses of the former reign; he denounced the frequent and costly journeys to Hanover, and contrasted the civil list of George I. with that of

Anne. He denied the necessity for any present augmentation. His amendment, however, was not even seconded, and the original proposal passed without further opposition.* The promised dowery was voted to the queen, apparently without observation. This necessary business being completed, the parliament was dissolved and another called.

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The general election immediately occupied the entire attention of the two parties, and the energies called forth on both sides were worthy the prize of the contest—seven years of political power. Walpole, however, had a great advantage; he not only wielded all the ordinary influence of the government, but he held the secret service purse, and was unscrupulous and lavish in its use. The new parliament met January 23, and their early proceedings denoted a spirit which equalled Walpole's most sanguine anticipations. The commons elected as their speaker Mr. Arthur Onslow, who so long and so worthily filled the same distinguished station. Mr. Hatsell, his friend and pupil, writes of this distinguished patron of his youth with generous enthusiasm. "Superadded to his great and accurate knowledge of the history of this country, and of the minuter forms and proceedings of parliament, the distinguishing feature of Mr. Onslow's public character, was a regard and vene-

* Parl. Hist., vol. viii., p. 603.

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ration for the British constitution, as it was declared and established at the revolution. This was the favourite topic of his discourse ; and it appeared from the uniform tenour of his conduct through life, that to maintain this pure and inviolate was the object at which he always aimed. In private life, though he held the office of speaker of the house of commons for above three-and-thirty years, and during part of that time enjoyed the lucrative employment of treasurer of the navy ; it is an anecdote perfectly well known that, on his quitting the chair in 1761, his income from his private fortune which had always been inconsiderable, was rather less than it had been in 1727, when he was first elected into it."

The commencement of the session was highly favourable to the ministers. Their subalterns* write in great exultation at their prosperous commencement, and Walpole could congratulate himself that those who put themselves most prominently forward in opposition were notorious Jacobites. " You will have learnt from others our success," writes Horace Walpole, " where the division was 290 against 86, the greatest majority that ever was known in a committee, and there is all the reason in the world to believe, that the rest of the public business will be

* Tilson; under secretary of state, to the Earl of Waldegrave, Feb. 2, 1727-8.

carried on by the same spirit and unanimity.”* The victory thus celebrated by Horace Walpole, was gained upon a motion for reducing the number of land forces. Six days afterwards, a debate upon a similar subject, was followed by a similar division, the numbers being 280 against 84. After these decisive defeats, Horace Walpole tells his correspondent that he looks upon the dispute about foreign affairs, as good as over. Daniel Pulteney, who had been intended for the office of secretary of state by Sunderland, and who, cherishing the memory of his patron, seemed to live only to carry on his plans of hostility against Walpole,† next attacked the ministry upon the subject of the national debt. The house, however, declared against him by a majority of 250 to 97, and pronounced that Walpole had, by the operation of the sinking fund, decreased the national debt to the amount of upwards of two millions and a half.‡ Daniel Pulteney must not be confounded with his relation and political ally William Pulteney;

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* Horace Walpole to the Earl of Waldegrave, Feb. 12, O. S., 1727-8. succeeding in it preyed upon his spirits; which, and with his living much with the Lord Bolingbroke

† Speaker Onslow says, “Daniel Pulteney gave up all pleasures and comforts, and every other consideration, to his anger, and fell at last a martyr to it, in his quarrel with Mr. Walpole. For his not (as an enemy to Mr. Walpole), threw him into an irregularity of drinking that occasioned his death.”

—*Remarks on the Opposition.*

‡ Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 659.

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for, although they acted in concert in parliament, there was no private friendship between them, and no other political sympathy than a common hostility to Walpole. Daniel Pulteney was a Tory, Onslow even insinuates that he was more.

Foiled in all these attempts, the opposition nevertheless pertinaciously returned to the charge, and chose a subject more generally understood, and therefore more extensively popular. The accusation of wholesale corruption is that which has always pressed the hardest upon Walpole and his administration ; it may be palliated, but it cannot be denied, it may be excused, but it cannot be defended. The accounts for the year 1727, contained an item of £250,000 for secret service money ; an immense sum according to the amount of the revenue of those days. This was fastened upon with eagerness by the Pulteneys and the other opposition leaders, and was made the subject of incessant motions in the commons. The Craftsman, and its fellow-labourers in the same cause, teemed with invectives against a ministry which had its power in the venal baseness of its supporters ; the people were excited by splendid declamation, which seemed to breathe the spirit of the citizens of the ancient republics. The youthful scions of noble houses were taken from the universities and poured into the house of commons, their minds yet occupied with the deeds of the

patriots who live in the writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy. Their fresh enthusiasm and real indignation lent the charm of sincerity and patriotism to the tactics of a faction. If many of these young declaimers wanted talent, none were deficient in energy and good-will. "It was indeed," says Mr. Speaker Onslow, "from the applause for speaking which these had acquired, that it became a fashion for most of the young men of birth and fortune to set themselves against the court, and to endeavour to obtain seats in parliament, for the sake of the fame they hoped to get as the others had done by popular declamations there, against the evil power and corruption of the administration, which they chiefly, or rather only, applied to Sir Robert Walpole, and too often in a language that by no means became their youth to give, or his years to have it given to him. But for this also, they had their applauders; and it is scarcely to be imagined to what a height it arose, and how much general mischief he received from this spirit and licentiousness of speech in these young patriots. It went the further, because in them it was deemed native virtue and disinterestedness, the result of untainted minds, and hearts too young to be corrupted by envy of power and profit (the usual motives of older men in faction), and in many or most of them, indeed, I am persuaded, in the beginning, at the least, they were made to believe they were saving

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their country from destruction, and that *they* only could do it. But they were the tools and instruments of those who meant no such thing, and who were in opposition only because they had not power, and made use of the virtue of these younger and better men to the quicker obtaining of it for themselves, which when they had done, and manifested by their after actings what their former motives had been, many of their young followers soon discerned the cheat and showed their resentment accordingly. Some, however, who were older and grown wiser, saw the prospect the change had opened, and made as able a use of it as the best experienced of their principals had done ; but alas, with a change too of style and behaviour.”*

Such were the reflections of this able and moderate man, upon the debates over which he had presided ; such was his estimation of the motives which prompted the exhibition of so much patriotism and so much pious horror of corruption. But because the object of the opposition was selfish, are we therefore to infer that the corruption denounced did not exist ? By no means. That its extent was greatly exaggerated, we cannot doubt, since it is described in the language of Pulteney and Bolingbroke ; and skilful exaggeration is the aim of eloquence. But the gene-

* Speaker Onslow's Remarks on the Opposition. Coxe, vol. ii., p. 569.

ral testimony of contemporaries denies the remark of Burke, that it is mere cant to charge him with having reduced corruption to a system.* “All those men have a price,”† was his common expression, as he listened with incredulous contempt to one of the chief patriot speakers, and his eye passed in scorn over the ranks of his supporters. In his practice, and, some assert, in his conversation, this maxim was generalized into “All men have their price.” He acted upon it with a boldness which proved his confidence in its truth, and with a success which appeared to be the reward of penetration. But Walpole’s task was only to procure a majority, and it was no new discovery that the majority of men are corruptible.‡ It is no intimation of a generous or comprehensive mind that, because he found the many ready to sell themselves to his service, he sneered at every profession of patriotism, and laughed to scorn the idea of public virtue. His biographer, in affecting to doubt that such was Walpole’s custom, rejects the

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* “Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.” Since the revolution the term “Old Whig” has been a title much contested. The very man whom Burke here brings forward as a specimen of the Old Whig, was railed at as a New Whig by his contemporaries. According to the Opposition, Pulteney and

his friends were the “Old Whigs.” Attempts to found the same distinction have been made since then. —*Burke’s Works*, 4to, vol. iii., p. 437.

† Coxe, vol. i., p. 757.

‡ ‘Οι πλεονεες κακοι is a truth older than the age of Bias.

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concurrent testimony of all who knew him. It would be a tedious and unnecessary task to put together the numerous and often-repeated anecdotes which tell with how little ceremony Walpole was accustomed to offer a bribe, and with what avidity it was usually received ; of these many are, doubtless, fabrications ; but their number, and the rapidity with which they circulated show, at least, the universal opinion in their favour. Pope, who, although the friend of Bolingbroke, was no lampooner of Walpole, lends them his authority, when he says,

“ Would he oblige me, let me only find
He does not think me what he thinks mankind.”

And I might crowd these pages with authorities to the same effect.

Corruption, open and undisguised, was, indeed, the vice of this age. Many of Walpole's most vehement accusers lived to be themselves personal proofs that their accusations had been well founded ; and many others, whom he could not or would not corrupt, discovered that if they kept their party honour it was not preserved by their public virtue. It was not the minister who corrupted the age ; his crime was, that he pandered to the prevailing depravity.

It is an observation startling, but true, that nothing but corruption—extensive, almost universal corruption, could have now preserved the Whig party. Theirs

was the triumph of influence over prerogative—of
money over power.

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I have said that about this time the principle of the Tory party underwent a change; that from monarchical it became suddenly aristocratical; that, despairing of recovering for the crown the prerogative by which they chiefly had been benefited, the Tories had conceived the design of recovering it for themselves. The contest had already commenced.

The foolish and unbending obstinacy of the Stuart kings had given such a predominant influence to the house of commons, that it was plain that within the walls of that house the battle must be fought. The Tory cause was now the same as that of the kings who had contended for an absolute prerogative had been, but the present claimants followed rather the policy of the predecessors of the Stuarts, who were aware that their power was effectually exercised upon the elements of a house of commons, but dangerously exerted against the united body.

Traces of the exercise of the power of the crown over elections to parliament exist from the earliest times. The sheriff, to whom the writs were directed, was chosen by the sovereign, and was consequently devoted to his interest: he could, therefore, neglect to hold an election in any borough which he had reason to suppose would choose a person unfavourable to the court. This absolute power of packing a house of commons was

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controllable only by the house, upon the application of the borough thus disfranchised; but while wages were regularly demanded and paid, and the choice of a representative was considered rather a burden than a privilege; while petitions to the king to be relieved from the charge were not unfrequent, and none but the largest towns were jealous of their right, such an application was very unlikely to be made. The complaisance and servility of the early houses of commons is thus accounted for, by the illegal exercise of the power of the crown upon their election. When, however, a seat in the commons house of parliament began to be considered an object of ambition, the power of returning representatives was naturally sought. Many boroughs that had long since discontinued to hold elections, now remembered their disused right, and recovered it upon petition *to the crown*. The power of controlling the elections by means of the sheriffs was then lost; but another, although not so efficient method, remained. It was an undisputed prerogative of the crown to create new boroughs, and this was frequently and skilfully exercised. At the accession of Henry VIII., the house of commons consisted of two hundred and ninety-eight members, which that monarch increased by the addition of thirty-eight.* This increase was made

* Parl. Hist., vol. i., p. 567.

by granting the right of election to Wales, Calais, and Berwick; but the genius of Wolsey, doubtless, provided that the privilege should be bestowed where it would be discreetly used. Edward VI. created twenty-two boroughs, returning forty-four* members; and, during the short succeeding reign of Mary, the enfranchisement of fourteen boroughs, returning twenty-five† members, was, doubtless, thought convenient to assist the revolution she contemplated. Her able successor did not neglect this privilege—the creation of thirty-one boroughs, returning sixty-two members, occurred during the reign of Elizabeth.‡ The addition of fourteen boroughs and twenty-seven§ members to the list, during the reign of James I., is attributable rather to a resolution of the house that any town which had, at any time, sent members to parliament, could resume at pleasure its customary privilege, and to the fondness of that king for exhibiting his prerogative, than to any design of managing his commons. The assembly had now become too large to be much influenced by any reasonable exertion of the prerogative of the crown: Charles I.,

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* Parl. Hist., vol. i., p. 603.

† Ibid., vol. i., p. 632.

‡ Ibid., vol. i., p. 958.—It will be remarked that Elizabeth created no borough without conferring upon it the full number of bur-

gesses—a sure indication that the charters were conferred to answer her own purposes. No monarch was ever so sparing in granting honours and immunities as Elizabeth.

§ Ibid., vol. i., p. 1511.

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 VIII. already too numerous; he expiated his own and his
 A. D. 1727 father's folly in attempting to dam up the river in its
 to 1730. might, which their predecessors had been contented
 to turn at its fountain head.

A glance at the names of the places which were the objects of the favour of the successive monarchs will abundantly show, that their object was not to keep pace with the increasing population, or to extend the elective right to newly-risen towns, but to increase the number of their friends in the lower house. At the accession of Henry VI., only five towns in Cornwall made returns; but at the death of Elizabeth, there were twenty-one boroughs in that county which sent members to parliament. The preference shown to this county was not on account of any superiority in trade or population over the rest of England, for it could claim none: nor did the size or importance of the enfranchised boroughs challenge the distinction—the great majority of them were then the petty villages, which they continue to this day. The true reason is assigned by a contemporary historian. “The county of Cornwall was more immediately subject to a coercive influence through the indefinite and oppressive jurisdiction of the Stannary court.”* If we could lay open the

* Hallam's Constitutional History, 8vo, vol. iii., p. 54.

sécret history of the rest of these charters, we should find that others were similarly recommended ; some were contained within the ancient demesnes of the crown, others were situated upon the estate of a courtier—all were, doubtless, considered securely within the influence of the court. Charles II., finding that the old expedient was worn out, invented another far more efficacious, and by his celebrated attack upon the charters, held all the borough representation of the kingdom at his mercy. This expedient was equal to any thing short of the mad designs of James II.

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Thus is the interposition of prerogative in elections to parliament seen to be, with one short and fatal interval, coexistent with parliaments. This ancient and valuable prerogative of placing its dependants in the house of commons, the crown had now lost. The Tories were resolved to recover it for themselves. It is impossible to look over the lists of the different houses of commons, for several centuries, without noticing the regularity with which certain boroughs were represented, from generation to generation, by persons of the same name. These were many of them boroughs created by early sovereigns for temporary purposes, which, being placed originally under the patronage of a courtier of approved loyalty, had descended in his family with the estate upon which he stood. They had served to

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introduce the heir into public life, or to aid the exertions of a younger son : to prepare the former for a seat in the lords, or to give the latter a means of obligation by which he might push his fortune at court. These boroughs had not been hitherto very numerous, but their existence was the germ of an all-important power which might be indefinitely increased. The Tories, possessing the great bulk of the landed property of the kingdom—for the possessions of individual Whigs, however enormous, was but as a drop against those of the Tory nobles—joined to that of the great body of second-rate landholders, were the landlords of the electors, and possessed means of coercion more effectual than any that had ever been possessed by the Tudors or the Stuarts. We have no proof that, in early times, this influence always possessed had been severely* exercised. The nobles were by no means anxious to preserve the plenitude of an undefined prerogative, and were very willing that the odium of opposition and the stigma of disloyalty should rest upon the people ; inferior proprietors were not anxious to leave their estates and field-sports for a political life, which then offered few advantages. What they disregarded themselves they did not think proper to harass their tenantry, and de-

* Perhaps they had little reason for severity, for it was not until the Whig doctrines had made considerable progress that the tenantry pretended to a will in such matters.

stroy the harmony of their district in order to obtain for another. But when the great landlords found that the struggle for power must be made in the commons, a very different conduct was pursued; rents were raised above the real value of land; small borough towns were decreased until they could be readily managed; corporations, possessing the exclusive power of election, were carefully filled with the dependants of the landlord; every method, which ingenuity and experience could devise, was employed to increase the dependence of the tenant upon the owner of the land. Thus the Tories obtained a more extensive prerogative than had been enjoyed by Elizabeth, and a power nearly as great as that usurped by Charles II.; a power which had this essential advantage over that of the crown, that whereas the exercise of the latter had been unpopular, tyrannical, and notorious, that of the former was usually secret, certainly legal, and invested with all the sacred character of private property.

Against this demonstration, which threatened to annihilate their party, the Whigs were bound to provide some countervailing expedient—they were obliged to have recourse to their exclusive possessions, as their opponents had had recourse to theirs. The Tories had nearly all the land, the Whigs had all the money, of the kingdom; the former had recourse to compulsion, the latter to persuasion; the former used force, the latter corruption. Armed with this weapon,

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the Whigs invaded the strongholds of their adversaries, and often did the promises of the Whig candidate deafen the elector to the threats of the Tory landlord. I say nothing of principle as having weight in the contest; for, while this degrading system of force and bribery reigned unchecked by education, the wretched class which formed its subjects neither knew nor cared ought of politics beyond the contest in their own village. But it was not always necessary to carry corruption among the vassals of an opponent, it was often more easy to gain the patron. While office, titles, and ribands, were in the possession of the Whigs there would be no lack of willing chapmen; and it was found highly practicable to convert into supporters some of those whom a Tory patron had sent into the commons as opponents. In large towns, where neither intimidation nor corruption were possible, the contest of principle was carried on, and here the Whigs were uniformly victorious. These formed the nucleus of the Whig party in the commons, which, swollen by the numbers that influence or corruption could detach from their opponents, resisted the encroachments of the Tories. The violence of party feeling had long since introduced a practice of increasing the majority of the victorious party to an overwhelming degree, by deciding all the election petitions according to the politics of the parties to the petition. Instances of

such a practice have already occurred in the course of this work, but it became now more open and avowed. The ballot and the oath, which preserve the impartiality of an election committee of the present day, were then unknown; the member who voted upon such questions did not even affect to be swayed by the merits of the case, nor did he imagine that his personal honour could be compromised by the most absurd or iniquitous vote. The committee formed to decide upon these questions was avowedly packed by the minister, and so shameless were its members, that so long ago as the time of Charles II. we find one of Danby's adherents, in an election case between Trenchard and Bertie, boasting that his party had just won the day, and carried it, by a good majority, that thirteen were more than one-and-twenty.* Such was another effect of the power of the Tories and the necessity of the Whigs.

This state of things did not, indeed, continue long. The advantages of having a party in power, which recognised and acted upon the old Whig principles, and a party in opposition which, for their own immediate purposes, pretended to embrace those principles, and to carry them to the verge of democracy, were soon apparent. The knowledge of and affection

* See a pamphlet, called "A and 1695, upon the Inquiry into Collection of Debates and Pro- Briberies and corrupt Practices." ceedings in Parliament, in 1694

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for popular rights gained ground in the nation; the popular party every where increased and grew into strength, even in the country; the advance of commerce and manufacture and the augmentation of the national debt added to its power. The Whigs were no longer in danger of annihilation, and the Tories, upon their return to office, found that, if it was pleasant to bestow the revenues of the state in rewarding their friends, it was necessary to employ a part of the booty in corrupting the people. But these were the circumstances of a later period; at the time of which I am now treating, the state of the contest between the parties was such as has already been described. A recollection of this description will enable us to understand why it is that the Tory, Bolingbroke, inveighs so eloquently against corruption, and why it is that, throughout that elaborate series of remarks upon the History of England, which he published in the Craftsman, his only aim appears to be to prove the superiority of prerogative over influence; in other words, of force over bribery. It may also account for the constant and energetic attacks upon the subject of the magnitude of the items for secret service money, and may, perhaps, point out the reason that they met with such signal defeats.

In the midst of a very violent debate upon the subject of the £250,000, which appeared in the public ac-

counts under this head, Walpole received a despatch that the convention with Spain had been signed at Pardo. The news quickly passed round the ministerial benches, and Walpole, availing himself, with his usual skill, of the exultation of his supporters, rose, and declared that the money about which so much had been said, was spent in procuring the honourable and advantageous terms of the convention, which he submitted to the house.* The opposition were silent, henceforward he heard no more upon this subject.

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The Bribery bill, which became a law in the session of 1729, is one of those invaluable measures which have resulted from party contests. It was introduced by the Tories, to put an end to the expensive contests which had recently shaken their dominion, even over their own boroughs; its title was highly popular, and Walpole did not attempt to resist it. When, however, the opposition found that they had failed in one of their objects, that of entrapping the minister into resistance to a popular measure, they became less eager in their promotion of the bill. Many of the Tories thought its provisions inconvenient, and so careless were they of its fate, that, when it was returned from the lords, it was received in a very thin house, and passed only by a

* De la Faye to the Earl of Coxe, vol. ii., p. 550, and vol. i., Waldegrave. Waldegrave Papers. p. 297.

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majority of two.* But we, nevertheless, owe this bill to the Tories; it certainly would not at this time have been proposed by the Whigs.

An occurrence, which took place in the same session, testifies that the Tories wanted rather the ability than the will to imitate the conduct they condemned. The king demanded of his minister £115,000 as an arrear of his civil list, stating that the arrears upon the several revenues were so great that they fell short of the full sum of £800,000 voted by parliament to this account. Upon an examination of the accounts this pretence appeared entirely without foundation, and Walpole is said to have used every effort of address and reasoning to dissuade the prosecution of the demand. He succeeded only in offending his master, not in shaking his resolution. This point of difference between the king and his minister quickly became known to the opposition; the leading Tories immediately attempted to improve the opportunity, and made secret offers, that, if the king would abandon Walpole, they would not only procure for him the sum he demanded, but add to it £100,000. When these proposals were communicated to Walpole he could no longer resist. The season for the regular introduction of such a motion was long since past; according to accounts then upon the table

* Parl. Hist., vol. viii. Tindal.

of the house, the civil list revenues far exceeded the sum voted. Altogether, this was one of the most impudent motions ever submitted to the commons; but it was carried by 241 against 115, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of the Tories and their allies, who did not hesitate to expose the fraudulent nature of a transaction by which they no longer expected to profit.*

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* Parl. Hist., vol. vii., p. 703.—Coxe (from the Etough Papers), vol. i., p. 300.

CHAPTER IX.

Resignation of Townshend—Causes of this event—Jealousy between him and Walpole—Biographical anecdotes of the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Harrington, Lord Chesterfield—Retirement and death of Townshend.

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AT the prorogation of parliament, in May, 1730, Townshend resigned his office of secretary, and material changes took place in the constitution of the administration. That same ambition, which severed the friendship that had existed between Stanhope and the brother ministers, had now corroded even the confidence that had united the latter. It had for some time past been well understood among their mutual friends, that the unanimity which once existed between the heads of the administration was no more. The jealousy that now arose was occasioned by the increase of the power of Walpole, and the consequent decrease of that of his brother-in-law. It was by no means unnatural that Townshend, who

had long accustomed himself to consider Walpole as his subordinate, and who had long been the acknowledged leader of the Whigs, should feel displeasure when he found that his influence was rapidly decaying, that the eyes of his party were turned to Walpole rather than to him, and that he was evidently now ranked as second to the man whom he had been used to lead. Many circumstances had combined to produce this effect. The most obvious was, doubtless, the superior talent of Walpole; his exquisite skill in debate, his great financial abilities, and his almost despotic influence in the house of commons. But Townshend contributed almost equally towards his own downfall. George I. had complained of the abruptness of his manner, and the irritability of his temper; these faults had not been corrected by time, and the best intentions and most unblemished integrity could not prevent their ill effects. Townshend grew unpopular in the cabinet; he found that all the members of the government looked to Walpole for direction and assistance; even foreign affairs, which had been ostensibly left under his control, were in fact guided by Walpole and the Duke of Newcastle. Every retainer of the government knew that Walpole influenced the queen, and that the queen was all-powerful with the king; they saw the jealousy which Townshend could not conceal, and, by openly siding with the stronger party, increased

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the breach. Unconscious of any reason why he was thus gradually sinking to the condition of a mere cipher in the cabinet, Townshend resolved to make an effort to recover his supremacy, and to effect the removal of those who appeared his most active opponents. Among these, the first was the Duke of Newcastle, his colleague in the secretaryship—a person of too much importance in the party history of his time to be passed over without particular notice.

This representative of the noble family of the Pelhams had been remarkable throughout his life for his zeal for the succession of the house of Brunswick. While a very young man, he had succeeded to the family peerage by the death of his father, Lord Pelham, and George I. had rewarded his attachment by creating him, firstly, Earl of Clare, and afterwards Duke of Newcastle. Although related in the same manner as Walpole to Viscount Townshend, he had attached himself to Sunderland and Stanhope upon the schism of 1717; but, upon the coalition which took place in 1720, he returned to the side of his old coadjutors, and was admitted into their entire confidence. Newcastle no longer considered himself identified with the section which continued for some time as a separate interest in the cabinet; during the cabals of Carteret and Cadogan, he continued steadfast to Walpole, and when the contest was con-

cluded, by Carteret's dismissal from the post of secretary, the duke was his successor.

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The Duke of Newcastle's appearance upon the political stage had been very early. Notwithstanding the important parts which he had already performed, his appointment as secretary of state took place when he was but thirty years old, a circumstance much commented upon by those who were attached to his predecessor, and appreciated the undoubted talent and business-like ability of that nobleman. The contrast was indeed great: the duke's want of method and regularity was so conspicuous that it immediately disgusted the king, who spoke of him with the utmost contempt, complaining that he was compelled to keep, as a minister, a man who was not fit to be chamberlain to the smallest court in Germany. Like the majority of those men who act without order or system, the duke was always in a hurry and always busy; it was remarked of him by Lord Hervey, that, "he did nothing with the same hurry and agitation as if he did every thing." It was quite in accordance with this characteristic that he should be profuse in promises and careless of their performance, and his reputation upon this point soon exceeded that which is ordinarily acquired by men in office. To his colleagues he was fretful and capricious, entertaining a lofty opinion of his own importance, and indignant at the most trifling instance of neglect; but notwithstanding this, he was greedy

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of flattery himself and prodigal of it upon others. In the house of lords he was a frequent speaker and an useful debater, possessing great presence of mind, and a ready reply to meet any sudden difficulty ; his oratory was like his conduct, without scope or method ; but his speeches, as well as his correspondence, discovered a great flow of language and power of expression. His high rank, immense wealth, extensive influence, high integrity, and reputed disinterestedness, rendered his alliance of great value to the administration, and entitled him to aspire to the first post in the government.

For some time, this nobleman had lived in the greatest cordiality with Walpole and Townshend. The three brothers-in-law were allies, which it was thought no political event could separate. In the correspondence between Townshend and Walpole, he is spoken of as their dear friend, from whom nothing was concealed ; but when Townshend's growing coldness showed that he could not brook the ascendancy of Walpole, the duke, although claiming himself to be a leader and a patron, evidently inclined to the support of the more powerful minister. His interference with Townshend's management of foreign affairs was particularly offensive to the irritable temper of the viscount, and he resolved that one of his first efforts should be to thwart the Duke of Newcastle.

An opportunity soon offered: Newcastle, whose ambition extended to the formation of a party of personal followers, had long since fixed upon William Stanhope, a distant kinsman of the late Earl Stanhope, as a man who would reward his patronage. Aided by the duke's powerful support, Stanhope abandoned the profession of a soldier, in which he had earned distinction, for that of a diplomatist, to which his talents were still more adapted. In 1717 he was appointed envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the king of Spain, and upon the rupture which broke out between Spain and England, in 1718, he received similar credentials to the court of Turin. After an intermission of his diplomatic duties, during which he resumed his sword, the peace with Spain restored him to his former post. The court of Madrid was, at this time, the theatre of the most delicate and involved negotiations; the frequent revolutions both in the court and in the policy of that kingdom, required the exertion of the highest order of diplomatic talent to watch and meet them. He watched over the interests of England during the mad career of Ripperda, and managed that weak visionary with such consummate skill, that he drew from him the whole secret of the negotiations which had recently taken place between Spain and the empire.

The siege of Gibraltar put an end to Stanhope's mission to Madrid, he returned to England and was

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appointed vice-chamberlain to the king, and afterwards joined with Horace Walpole and Stephen Poyntz, as one of the English plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Soissons. Stanhope was fully equal to this important office. He was possessed of great temper and moderation, and had acquired such a habit of patience and forbearance in his deportment, that it is said he never interrupted those who spoke to him. To these professional advantages he added strong sense, strict honour, and a singular reputation for veracity. Philip of Spain said of him, "Stanhope is the only foreign minister who never deceived me."

The friendship of the Duke of Newcastle now encouraged Stanhope to aspire to the peerage; but he found in the king and Sir Robert Walpole unexpected enemies. The causes which are assigned for the hostility of these two powerful persons are somewhat singular. Stanhope's brother Charles had been secretary to the Earl of Sunderland, and in this capacity had copied a memorial which that minister had presented to George I., advising the adoption of strong coercive measures against the prince. This memorial George II. found among his father's papers, and, as the author was dead, he vented his resentment upon the copyist. He forbade Walpole to mention Charles's name to him,* and extended his resentment

* Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole, vol. i., p. 300.

to the whole family. Walpole's biographer attributes the opposition of that minister to his having taken an aversion to the very name of Stanhope,* since the difference which occurred between him and the earl: a reason which just equals in absurdity that assigned for the dislike of the king. But such whimsical antipathies are not usual in ministers who are obliged to sustain themselves in power, by a skilful management of parties; and Walpole had already incurred the anger of the king by recommending Charles Stanhope to be a lord of the admiralty, a fact not very compatible with the indulgence of his general disgust.

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Stanhope's services, in conducting the negotiations which ended in the treaty of Seville, gave such weight to the recommendation of the Duke of Newcastle, that the peerage could no longer be refused. In November, 1729, he took his seat in the house of peers as Baron Harrington, looking upon the Duke of Newcastle as the patron to whom he owed his elevation. Encouraged by this success the duke proposed to bring him into the cabinet, as secretary of state; and this attempt, thinking the juncture highly favourable, Townshend resolved to oppose. The candidate whom Townshend proposed to set up against Harrington, was the Earl of Ches-

* Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole, vol. i., p. 331.

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terfield, a man far more distinguished as a diplomatist and a writer than as a party leader. This nobleman, however, failed to attain that place among the most eminent statesmen of his country which he ambitioned, rather from the force of adverse circumstances, and from important results arising from errors and omissions, in themselves trivial, than from any inferiority of talent. Chesterfield would have graced the highest station, but perhaps his intellect was too delicate for the continual clashing of party warfare. His biographer thus describes his talents for debate: "Lord Chesterfield's eloquence, though the fruit of study and imitation, was in great measure his own: equal to most of his contemporaries in elegance and perspicuity, perhaps surpassed by some in extensiveness and strength, he could have no competitors in choice of imagery, taste, urbanity, and graceful irony. This turn might originally have arisen from the delicacy of his frame, which, as on the one hand it deprived him of the power of working forcibly upon the passions of his hearers, enabled him on the other to affect their finer sensations by nice touches of raillery and humour. His strokes however poignant, were always under the control of decency and good sense. He reasoned best when he appeared most witty; and, while he gained the affections of his hearers, he turned the laugh on his opposers, and often forced them to join in it. It

might, in some degree, be owing to this particular turn, that he was not heard with so much applause in the lower as the upper house. Refined wit and delicate irony are often lost in popular and numerous assemblies. Strength either of argument or voice, or a flow of pompous words, and a continual appeal to the passions, are in such places the best arms to support a good cause or to defend a bad one. The case is very different in the house of peers. Minds cast in a finer mould, affect to despise what they call the vulgar arts, and raised equally above fears and feelings, can only be affected by wit and ridicule, and love to find some of that elegant urbanity and convivial pleasantry which charms them in private life.”*

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Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, was born in September, 1694, of a lineage which requires no description. At the age of eighteen, he appears to have inspired those ideas of politeness and delicacy which characterized him in after life. He chose Trinity Hall, Cambridge, as his college, because “it was filled with lawyers who had seen the world, and knew how to behave,” and he adds, “whatever

* Dr. Maty's Memoirs of the Earl of Chesterfield, vol. i., p. 39. It is said that he was prevented from speaking in the commons by the fear of being made the subject of the mimicry of one of the members who was in the habit of amusing the house, by imitating in his speeches the tones and gestures of his opponents.

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may be said to the contrary, there is certainly very little debauchery in this university, especially among people of fashion, for a man must have the inclinations of a porter to endure it here.”* His reading at this time appears to have been rather diffuse than solid, he had a great aversion to Greek grammar, and a particular affection for royal roads to learning; yet, when at the age of nineteen, he left the university, he says he came into the world an absolute pedant. When I talked my best I talked Horace; when I aimed at being facetious I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained every thing that was either necessary, or useful, or ornamental to men, and I was not without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis* of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns.”† But even thus early, the young Lord Stanhope turned his attention to the cultivation of that eloquence which could alone obtain for him po-

* The young Lord Stanhope wine and tobacco, only because I did, however, like many others, thought it genteel, and that it soon learn to endure it. In one made me look like a man.” From of the letters to his son, he says, one of his letters to his tutor, it “ When I first went to the univer- appears also that he did not ne- sity, I drank and smoked notwith- glect Newmarket.—*Maty’s Corre-* standing the aversion I had to *spondence*, vol. ii.

† Letters to his son, vol. ii., p. 174.

litical power; he writes, that pieces of ancient and modern eloquence had been at that time his principal study, and that he used to write down the shining passages and then translate them as well and as elegantly as he could: if Latin or French, into English: if English, into French. This, which he practised for some years, not only improved and formed his style, but imprinted in his mind and memory, the best thoughts of the best authors. "The trouble," he says, "was little, but the experience I acquired was great."*

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A little experience in the world was sufficient to remove any of the rust of pedantry which Stanhope might have gathered at Trinity Hall. He was sent from the university, unattended, to pursue the ordinary course of travel, and aimed at perfection as a man of shining rank and character. "I was then," he says, "young and silly enough to believe that gaming was one of these accomplishments; and as I aimed at perfection, I adopted gaming as a necessary step to it. Thus, I acquired by error, the habit of a vice which, far from adorning my character, has, I am conscious been a great blemish to it.†

It is pleasing to be able to make such a man as Chesterfield relate the incidents of his life. The description he gives of himself soon after his

* Letters to his son, vol. ii., p. 341.

† Ibid., p. 352.

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arrival in Paris, forms a strong contrast with the portrait he has drawn when he emerged from the cloisters of Cambridge. Writing to his early tutor, Mr. Jouneau, he says, "I shall not give you my opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one, and many a Frenchman has paid me the highest compliment they think they can pay to any one, which is, 'Sir, you are just like one of us!' I shall only tell you, that I am insolent; I talk a great deal; I am very loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I go along; and lastly, I spend a monstrous deal of money in powder, feathers, gloves, &c."*

His allusions to this period of his life in those letters which conveyed the results of his matured experience, are by no means so favourable: when writing these, he acknowledged that this constant talk, and loud and peremptory manner were awkwardly assumed to hide a rude bashfulness and awkward timidity.

His opinions upon political subjects, as he then expressed them, are certainly very much in accordance with the character which he himself drew—they are sufficiently strong and dogmatical to vouch the accuracy of the rest of the picture. They are not only those of a Whig, but those of a Whig so blinded by party feeling, as to credit the most mon-

* To Jouneau, Dec. 7, 1714. Maty, vol. ii., p. 12.

strous and extravagant reports. Thus he assumes, as well known facts, not only the illegitimacy of the son of James II., but also that Queen Anne was a Roman Catholic. This ignorance may, perhaps, be excused by his residence abroad; but his observations upon the queen's death are curious, inasmuch as they show what improbabilities some of the Whig party were driven, by their terror, to credit: "Had I no other reason, the sorrow alone, which appeared in the French and in the English who followed the pretender, on the death of the queen, would be enough to comfort me for that event; but when I see how far matters were already advanced in favour of the pretender and popery, and that we were on the very brink of slavery, I absolutely look upon the death of that woman as the happiest thing that has ever befallen England; for, had she lived three months longer, she was certainly going to establish her own religion, and, of course tyranny; would have left us, at her death, a bastard for our king, just as great a fool as herself, and who, like her, would have been led by the nose by a set of rascals. The pretender's declaration, and a thousand other things, are convincing proofs of the designs of those conspirators, the ministry, to bring him in."*

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* To Jouneau, Dec. 7, 1714. Maty, vol. ii., p. 12.

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Upon the formation of the Townshend administration, Lord Stanhope's abilities had been so favourably spoken of, that he was sent for by his kinsman, General Stanhope; and upon his arrival in London, was appointed one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber to the Prince of Wales. In this situation, he obtained the friendship of the Earl of Scarborough, then Lord Langley, and the favour of the prince, although not yet of age. He procured a seat in parliament, by means of a Cornish borough, and made his first essay in parliament in a speech against the Duke of Ormond, almost equal in its violence to his letter on the same subject. A member of the opposition having hinted to the young senator, that he was aware of his exact age, Lord Stanhope thought fit to return to Paris, where he employed himself in the study of diplomacy; and, it is said, in searching after Jacobite intrigues. When the cause of his absence was removed, he returned to England, and to the house of commons; and, upon the occasion of the quarrel between the king and the prince, attached himself to the interest of the latter. Lord Stanhope now joined the opposition, and outraged his principles by voting, with Walpole, against the repeal of the occasional Conformity and Schism acts. He has recurred to this vote as an error; if he mentioned it at all, it should have been as a dishonesty. The Stanhopes were

opposed upon ordinary subjects ; but they *all* divided in favour of the Peerage bill. This was a boon to the aristocracy too weighty not to break through the tendril patriotism of the young nobleman. The death of his father, in 1726, placed him in the house of peers as Lord Chesterfield.

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Upon the accession of George II., in whose service he had been engaged for thirteen years, Chesterfield expected to divide the offices of the state with those who had been his associates at the little court at Leicester House. His name, however, was not in the list of promotions, nor was he even restored to those places which his devotion to the prince had caused him to lose. Sometime afterwards he was despatched as ambassador to the Hague, where his conduct and skill is admitted to have merited the highest approbation. In the eyes of George they were particularly meritorious, since they were exerted with success, to ward off a Prussian invasion from his beloved electorate. "I am persuaded," says one, who was not ignorant of Chesterfield's character, "that his being sent to Holland was rather an honourable exile than a mark of favour ; he would, in all probability, have been troublesome at home. Walpole did not envy him the honour of shining among the Dutch, and eclipsing a French envoy by superior adroitness." Yet it was this adroitness

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which so far recommended him to the king, that Townshend was able to play him off with a hope of success against Newcastle and Walpole.*

Chesterfield's conduct at this juncture forms a remarkable proof how much easier it is to pen specious precepts, and to clothe them in elegant language, than to recommend them by practice. In the conduct of the author of the courtly letters to Philip Stanhope, we expect to meet the skilful management of the light meshes of intrigue; unremitting, but unobtrusive, assiduity in cultivating the favour of the dispensers of honour and power; a profound knowledge of the tempers and dispositions of those whom he hoped to influence; and a delicate use of even their slightest prejudices. But, according to the secret history of this transaction, as it is revealed by the biographer of Walpole, Chesterfield destroyed his own hopes and those of his patron by an error so palpable, that it would have been despised by the youngest of the candidates for the royal favour who crowded the levees of St. James's. When he first aspired to the office of secretary, Chesterfield applied himself to gain the confidence of the queen as anxiously as he had laboured to ingratiate himself with the king; and when Townshend inquired whether

* Maty. Coxe. Life of Chesterfield. Anon.

he expected opposition from this quarter, his answer was that every thing was in his favour. When every thing had been arranged between him and the secretary, he begged the queen to mention the affair to the king, and obtain the appointment. She readily promised; but Chesterfield, anxious to make his success still more secure, went from the presence of the queen to that of Mrs. Howard, and begged her intercession also in his favour. This ill-timed homage to her rival was, of course, reported to the queen; and when Walpole visited her, to represent the mischief which must accrue from such an appointment, he found a ready audience. The queen put her veto upon it, and it did not take place.*

This intrigue, which seems to have proceeded very far without being suspected by Walpole, was the occasion of an open and unseemly quarrel between the brothers-in-law. As we derive our knowledge of this

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* I have attempted, in the text, in his Character of Lord Townshend, says, "Lord Townshend resolved to make one convulsive struggle to revive his expiring power, or, if that did not succeed, to retire from business. He tried the experiment upon the king, with whom he had a personal interest. The experiment failed, *as he might easily and ought to have foreseen.*" There is some truth, but more spleen, in this remark.

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affair from Mr. Coxe, its circumstances may be related in the words of that author.

“ On quitting the palace, after a conference with the queen upon the means of averting Townshend’s design, Walpole met that nobleman at Colonel Selwyn’s in Cleveland Court, in the presence of the Duke of Newcastle, Mrs. Pelham, Colonel and Mrs. Selwyn. The conversation turned on a foreign negotiation, which, at the desire of Walpole, had been relinquished. Townshend, however, still required that the measure should be mentioned to the commons, at the same time that the house should be informed that it was given up. Walpole objecting to this proposal as inexpedient, and calculated only to give unnecessary trouble, Townshend said, ‘ Since you object, and the house of commons is your concern more than mine, I shall not persist in my opinion ; but, as I now give way, I cannot avoid observing that, upon my honour, I think that mode of proceeding would have been more advisable.’ Walpole, piqued at these expressions, lost his temper, and said, ‘ My lord, for once, there is no man’s sincerity which I doubt so much as your lordship’s, and I never doubted it so much as when you are pleased to make such strong professions.’ Townshend, incensed at this reproach, seized him by the collar ; Sir Robert laid hold of him in return, and then both at the same instant quitted their hold, and laid their

hands upon their swords. Mrs. Selwyn, alarmed, attempted to go out and call the guards, but was prevented by Pelham. But, although their friends interposed to prevent an immediate duel, yet the contumelious expressions used on that occasion rendered all attempts to heal the breach ineffectual.”*

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This anecdote exhibits the character of Walpole in no favourable light. If neither friendship nor relationship could restrain his passion, the ties of gratitude should at least have forbidden him to throw this atrocious and unmerited insult upon a man whose public life had been far more spotless than his own, and who had then many reasons for dissatisfaction at his own situation, if not of complaint at the conduct of his friends. Further attempt at reconciliation was, of course, useless.

Townshend, being defeated in every attempt by the interest of the queen, at length resigned the contest, and, having retired from office, betook himself to Rainham, with a resolution of never again appearing in public life. This resolution was nobly kept. Sometime afterwards, Chesterfield, then in opposition to Walpole, paid a visit to the retired statesman, and begged him to be present at an important debate which was coming on in the lords. Townshend however declined. “I recollect,” he

* Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. i., p. 336.

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said, “that Cowper, although a stanch Whig, had been betrayed, by personal pique and party resentment in his opposition to the ministry, to throw himself into the arms of the Tories, and even to support principles which tended to serve the cause of the Jacobites. I know that I am extremely warm; and I am apprehensive, if I should attend the house of lords, I also may be hurried away by the impetuosity of my temper to adopt a line of conduct, which, in my cooler moments, I may regret.” This determination Lord Townshend persevered in. It is no small eulogium upon a nobleman accustomed to public life, and highly interested in all its exciting pursuits, who conceived himself ill-treated, and was naturally irritable and passionate, that he refused to place himself at the head of a party which courted him with open arms to come and avenge himself, and chose rather to let his personal rivals reign, with a party whose rule he thought advantageous to his country, than reign himself with a party whose principles of government he thought mischievous.

Townshend never afterwards visited the metropolis; he passed the evening of his life upon his own estates, and died in 1738, aged 84, leaving a reputation, if not for brilliant talents and commanding genius, yet for high integrity and a steady consistency in sound and constitutional principles of government, which has never been surpassed. Towns-

hend's public life was not without error; occasional acquiescence in the German politics of the Georges may, doubtless, be charged upon him, and many, who had none of his virtues, have assiduously aggravated his faults. In the history of the parties we shall find many more brilliant, but very few more respectable or patriotic statesmen than Charles Viscount Townshend.

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Walpole was now undisputed dictator of the cabinet; he was supported by large majorities in both houses of parliament, and, fortified by the favour of the queen, was all-powerful with the sovereign. In 1731, the paper controversy between Walpole and Pulteney took place, which has been already referred to as revealing the secret history of the negotiation for the reconciliation between the present king and his father. The contemptuous observations with regard to the prince which Pulteney, in his reply, attributes to Walpole, were, of course, intended to shake his interest at court. So far, however, from having this effect, they only aroused the anger of the king against the reporter of them. It is said that it was upon this occasion that George called for the privy-council book, and with his own hand struck out Pulteney's name from the list.

During this period of the government of the Whigs, the country was in a highly flourishing condition. Anxious to conciliate the Tories, and to draw that

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class, among which their great strength lay, into the interests of the reigning family, the minister strained every nerve to lighten the burdens of the landlords and agriculturists. He gradually reduced the land-tax from four shillings to two shillings in the pound, while the sinking-fund was annually paying off £1,200,000 of the public debt. In 1732, the land-tax was only one shilling in the pound; a reduction which was accomplished by the re-imposition of the salt-tax, and an intimation was at the same time made, that a measure was in agitation which would enable the government to repeal this tax altogether. It is very seldom that a government gains either strength or popularity by attempts to conciliate opponents; the abolition of no tax can compensate the leading few for the power and emoluments from which they are excluded. The present case was no exception. The opposition rightly conjectured that the projected equivalent was an excise; and they seized upon the word as an invaluable theme for declamation. So odious had these species of revenue been, on account of the inquisitorial power it lodged in the crown, the cloak which it afforded for the most monstrous oppression, and the well-remembered extent to which it had been abused, that our ancestors, under the old dynasties, could not endure the mention of the name, and it was sometimes dangerous for a member to speak the word in the house of commons,

even in illustration of a foreign argument. The danger had ceased at the revolution; but the odium still remained, and the opposition, citing the authorities of Hampden and of Marvel, denounced a mere method of collecting a revenue, in terms of indignation which those illustrious men had used to reprobate a system which, under the cloak of an excise, established a despotism.* We laugh at the invectives of the Craftsman and its fellow-labourers in the work of agitation, and at the absurdity of the charge they brought against Walpole, that he was attempting to “bring in absolute power:”† they succeeded, however, so well in confounding the cases of power given to an irresponsible monarch, and power intrusted to responsible ministers, that an outcry against the contemplated measure burst forth from every part of the nation. It is very improbable, however, that the inflammatory rhetoric of Pulteney

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* Coxe's Walpole, vol. i., p. 372. collected into a volume, under the title of, “An Argument against
Parl. Hist., vols. viii. and ix. Excises,” bearing on its titlepage

† The papers in the Craftsman, upon this subject, were afterwards those lines of Marvel:

“Excise, a monster worse than e'er before,
Frighted the midwife, and the mother tore;
A thousand hands she hath, a thousand eyes,
Breaks into shops, and into cellars pries;
With hundred rows of teeth the shark exceeds,
And on all trades, like Casawar, she feeds.”

The argument in prose is about as cogent as that in the poetry.

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and his friends would have found such immediate success, had not the excise been rendered unpopular by more practical considerations than a traditional hatred. However much necessity and habit has since reconciled us to its existence, this species of impost always was and will be unpopular. The restrictions it imposes upon trade; the necessary, but troublesome and minute forms it requires; but, above all, the power it rests in a petty official, to violate, at pleasure, the sanctity of the domestic hearth savour strongly of slavery, and are abhorrent to the feelings of Englishmen. When Walpole, early in 1733, brought forward the subject in the house of commons, the popular excitement was intense. It was in vain that he, in a luminous and well-managed speech, set forth the advantages of his proposition; detailed the dreadful abuses which a recent investigation into the existing method of collecting the revenues had brought to light, and demonstrated that he had only legitimate objects in contemplation; it was in vain that he stated those objects to be the augmentation of the revenue; the simplification of the taxes; the facilitating the collection and reducing its cost; and the division of a tax, which now pressed heavily upon individuals, until it became scarcely perceptible among the great mass of the population. The opposition answered him with florid declamation; and the Tories rejected his proposed boon, with the then fashionable

sophism, that all taxation ultimately fell upon the land. The public voice, out of doors, re-echoed the sentiments of the opposition within. Those members who supported the minister were pelted by the mob; and crowds assembled round the house of commons, while the debates were proceeding, bearing in their hats placards inscribed, "Liberty and no Excise," and strengthening, by their shouts, the arguments of the opposition. Still, however, the bill might have passed into a law. The ministerial majorities, both in the commons and the lords, were still firm, and Walpole would, doubtless, have been supported, during the contest.* But that minister paid the deference to public opinion, which the principles of his party enjoined. When he saw that this was clearly and unequivocally against him, he at once yielded. He told his supporters that he was conscious of having meant well. But in the present inflamed temper of the people, the act could not be carried into execution without an armed force. That there would be an end of the liberty of England, if supplies were to be raised by the sword, and he would not be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood.†

The bill was therefore dropped; the house ad-

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* The commons had agreed to bill was founded by a majority of the resolutions upon which the 266 to 205.—*Parl. Hist.*

† Coxe's Memoirs of Walpole.

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journing over the day upon which it was ordered to be read a second time.

Whatever we may think of the policy of this purposed alteration in the finance of the country, we cannot charge the Whigs with any important dereliction from their party principles in bringing it forward. It was a weak attempt to conciliate their adversaries, and met with the usual fate of such attempts. The error is more apparent in the conduct of Walpole, since no man was better aware of the impolicy of such a course.* It has often been repeated by his party, and has as often involved them, without any other effect, in the unpopularity of their rivals. The Tories have sometimes, but more rarely, made the same experiment, and always with the same success.

But, although this means of abolishing the land-tax was abandoned, Walpole did not forsake his resolution of keeping that impost as low as possible. The rate made in 1733 was not raised above one shilling in the pound. This, however, was accomplished by encroaching upon that fund then so actively decreasing the burdens of the country. Posterity, which has felt the consequence of this alienation, has loudly condemned the minister who pro-

* "I should be but a pitiful minister," said Walpole, upon one occasion, when reproached with dismissing two officers who voted against him, "if I suffered those who are in opposition to continue in employment."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxxiv., p. 418.

posed the measure, but has never scrupled to imitate his conduct. Nothing was more popular, with all parties, at the time it was proposed. The Tories gained in the reduction of the land-tax; the Whigs gained in the perpetuity of the moneyed interest, formed as it was upon the public debt. That self-denial, which bears contentedly a burden that may be shifted to the next generation, is not common in individuals; it is scarcely known to nations. The only parties that disliked Walpole's project were the opposition in parliament; they knew that the popularity he must gain by it would diminish their chance of enjoying his places.

If Walpole had been a minister of comprehensive genius, of penetrating mind, and extended views, this compliance with circumstances would have been a blot upon his administration; but Walpole has no claim to any such qualities. His object extended no further than his own day. To keep the country in peace abroad and in prosperity at home, the house of Hanover upon the throne, and the Whigs in power,—during his own time—were all he sought; if this could be done by the dexterous management of every means at his command he was content. He left future contingencies to future ministers. His conduct, in this instance, was, therefore, consonant with his character and his policy.

The opposition, flushed with their success upon

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the subject of the excise, resolved to improve their advantage. Bolingbroke, who directed their council, supposed that the storm of unpopularity, which had recently raged around the cabinet, must have shaken the influence of the minister, not only over his colleagues, but also with the king. He resolved, therefore, upon a trial of strength, at which the minister's supporters should vote as they pleased. A ballot for a committee to inquire into the frauds in the customs, was the chosen opportunity, and the hopes of the opposition were highly raised; but they were raised only to be dashed, for the ministerial list was carried by a majority of eighty-five.

The firmness of the king was manifested as unequivocally. The Earl of Chesterfield, who had influenced his three brothers in the commons to vote against the Excise bill, was dismissed from his office of lord steward of the household. The Duke of Bolton was required to resign his places of lord lieutenant and custos rotulorum of the county of Southampton, his regiment of horse, and his government of the Isle of Wight. The Duke of Montrose, lord privy seal of Scotland, the Earl of Marchmont, lord registrar, Lord Clinton, gentleman of the bed-chamber and lord lieutenant of Devon, and Lord Cobham, colonel of a regiment of horse,* shared the

* It was upon the occasion of the dismissal of Lord Cobham and

same fate. Walpole appointed his own son to the lieutenancy, whence Lord Clinton was dismissed. The occasion of these changes was the discovery of an intrigue by which Chesterfield, taking advantage of the popular effervescence upon the excise scheme, had hoped to supplant Walpole. In this attempt he had been supported by the Scots lords—not from any hostility to the excise, but because they wished to destroy the influence of the Earl of Islay, brother to the Duke of Argyle. To this nobleman Walpole had intrusted the affairs of Scotland; and by his conduct he had incurred the hatred of his brother peers, and deserved the support of the ministers.

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To counterbalance the force gained by the opposition in the lords, by these numerous removals, Sir Philip Yorke, who had passed with almost unexampled rapidity through the various grades of his profession, and who, in 1723 had been appointed attorney-general, being then only in his thirty-fourth year, was now made lord chief justice of the King's Bench, and called to the upper house by the title of Baron Hardwicke, a title which his talents and learning rendered illustrious. Lord Hardwicke's style of

the Duke of Bolton, that Walpole were stanch Whigs, the removals made the remark above mentioned. were far from popular, although But as most of the persons now to Walpole highly necessary. discarded, Lord Cobham especially,

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oratory was that most adapted to the higher practice of his profession ; it was precise, argumentative, temperate, and sound. He seldom rose into animation, but his language was uniformly fluent, well chosen and elegant. His speeches were more adapted to the assembly in which he was now placed, than to the commons. The minister found him a very efficient ally in the house of lords.

CHAPTER X.

Bill to render the officers of the army independent of the crown—The Place Bill—Motion for the repeal of the Septennial Bill—Debate upon it—Biographical Anecdotes of Sir John Barnard.

THE session of 1734, was the last session of this parliament; at its conclusion a general election would test the popularity of the minister, and the relative strength of the parties. For this occasion, therefore, all the artillery of opposition had been carefully prepared, and it was determined to keep up throughout the session a constant battery of charges, with the hope, that, at least, some one of them would take effect.

The body of opposition was, however, now less united than it had been. The immediate expectation of the downfall of Walpole, which had been entertained during the last year, had caused its chiefs to think of a successor, and it became evident that a

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government could never be formed from the incongruous elements, the disaffected Ultra Whigs and the Aristocratic Tories, which made up the opposition.

Pulteney, and Wyndham, who was the mere mouth-piece of Bolingbroke, therefore beheld each other with considerable distrust, it was only immediate necessity which held them together.

The result of their mutual concessions was a course of conduct too wildly revolutionary in its tendency to be seriously approved even by the most violent of their Whig allies. The object, incessant opposition, was allowed to be controlled by no consideration of principle or expediency. The more violent the proposition, the greater they thought was its probability of becoming popular, and of securing the votes of the electors for those who had given it their advocacy.

The question of foreign policy was attempted first. But in vain; the public looked on with apathy, and immense majorities in parliament rejected their motions.

The excise had proved too fortunate a speculation to be easily abandoned. The session was not far advanced before an opportunity was created by the presentation of a petition, to renew the subject. The opposition put forth all their powers of invective in abuse of the defunct measure, and Pulteney, after dwelling upon the wickedness of the scheme, and

citing a remark of Walpole, that many who then envied him in other things, would come also to envy him the honour of having originated that project, added, "I am persuaded he still has the same good opinion of it, and waits only for a proper opportunity to renew it." Walpole seized the occasion to set the question at rest. He declared the purity of his intentions in bringing forward the measure, confessed that his opinion was unchanged, and attributed the tumultuous opposition he had experienced, to the factious proceedings and artful misrepresentations of his political opponents. But he repudiated the idea that he ever intended to revive the project. "I, for my own part," he said, "can assure this house that I am not so mad as ever again to engage in any thing that looks like an excise."* This distinct contradiction prevailed over all the rhetoric of his opponents. The house decided in his favour by a majority of 247 to 184. The disavowal of the minister had prevented any popular excitement, and nothing was yet accomplished towards the elections.

The next attempt was one of no inconsiderable magnitude in a constitutional point of view. It was founded upon the dismissal of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham from their rank in the army. Such an exercise of ministerial power would certainly, in

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 254.

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* Every reader will remember my, and of allowing no officer to instances of the exercise of this hold a commission who would not power. Bolingbroke had been so promise to serve the queen "without unscrupulous in the use of this asking questions."—*Boyer's* prerogative, that he was accused *Political State*. of a design of remodelling the ar-

complete and unqualified subserviency to the civil magistrate. Render the army once dependent only upon its own courts martial, or upon the votes of an assembly to which its members have access, and the magic power is gone which prevents it becoming the lawless despot of the country it was created to defend. Walpole well observed, that if this bill passed, the government of England would be no longer a monarchy, but a stratocracy.* Had this measure passed, we might have had the deeds of the Prætorian Bands re-enacted upon British ground.

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It cannot be imagined that the able men who advocated this measure were ignorant of its tendency, or that those who assumed to themselves exclusively the title of patriots, were anxious to bring their country under the rule of the sword. It is more charitable to adopt the supposition of Tindal. "To say truth," remarks that historian, "the party neither expected nor desired to succeed. All they intended was to have an opportunity of saying severe things against the minister." They created and used the opportunity; but with little effect towards their chief object, which was to influence the coming elections.

Another popular measure brought forward with the same view was, what was then called the Place bill ;

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix.

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a measure to limit the number of officers of the crown who should be eligible to a seat in parliament. This bill was opposed rather by votes than words: the minister appears to have spoken merely for the sake of form, and many of his supporters were silent, because they dreaded to oppose a popular bill upon the eve of a general election. It was thrown out only by a majority of 39.*

In another effort the Tories were more earnest. Bolingbroke had long since suggested to his party to bring forward a motion for the repeal of the Septennial act. Such a measure would combine general popularity with advantage to the best interests of the Tory party. But their Whig allies were very unwilling to assist. Determined as was their hostility to the minister, they had yet some respect for consistency, and shrunk from proposing the repeal of a bill of which they were themselves the advocates and authors. Now, however, when every part of their reserved power was to be forced into action, this scruple was overcome, and it was agreed that

* Walpole's speech was chiefly ix., p. 388. This remark is important, since it shows that members of parliament had begun to speak to the public.—Mr. Coxe was deceived by Chandler into the error, that Walpole gave a silent vote upon this occasion.

a motion should be made condemnatory of this act.

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To this contest the opposition summoned all their energy, and the debate which ensued was the prominent feature of the session. Pulteney and his friends were upon this occasion placed in a false position. The contest was in reality strictly between Whig and Tory,—between corruption and influence,—bribery and prerogative. It was plainly the interest of the landlords to have frequent elections. Their influence over their tenantry was always existent,—its exertion cost them nothing. On the other hand, the sacrifice by which the Whigs overcame this influence was very great, and could not be sustained if it was necessary that it should be frequently repeated. This was not only felt by the Tories, but it was openly avowed. Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who possessed at that time the influence in his native principality which his descendants still hold, who was a cautious Jacobite, but a bold Tory and a skilful electioneerer, openly denounced the Septennial bill as destructive of the influence of country gentlemen, and professed himself, for this reason, an advocate even of annual parliaments. “Give me leave then to suppose,” said this gentleman, “two gentlemen set up in opposition to each other, for representing one of our little boroughs in parliament; one of them a country gentleman, of a great natural interest in the

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Sir Watkin Wynn, in this speech, states the real question, and exposes the real nature of the struggle. He does not even affect to regard the question as one involving the rights of the electors ; he states, at once, that it is intended to favour the landed and discourage the moneyed interest. The members of the latter were, of course, being in administration, in the language of the Tories, placemen, pensioners, dependants, and courtiers.

After stating what, in his idea, are the uses of a parliament, Sir Watkin proceeds, “ Now I would be glad to know who are the most proper representatives for these purposes ; gentlemen who have large properties in the country, who are independent of the

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 429.

ministers and officers of the crown, and who, by living in the country, are perfectly acquainted with the circumstances of the people; or gentlemen who, for their chief support, depend upon the ministers and officers of the crown, who know nothing of those they represent, and are not only ignorant of their true interests, but are really indifferent about their welfare. I hope it will not be controverted which are the most proper representatives of the people; and if so, annual or triennial parliaments are better than septennial, because there is a greater probability of their being chiefly composed of such gentlemen.”

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In these extracts I look only for the ingenuous acknowledgment of an influential Tory as to the real nature of this motion, as a party question. As a specimen of argument, to prove the superior eligibility of one class of candidates, Sir Watkin's speech has certainly no pretensions to be revived. It is immediately seen that his comparison proceeds only upon certain unproved assertions, and upon the accidental circumstance, that the party which was composed of country gentlemen was then in opposition,—“independent of the ministers and officers of the crown.”*

Such were the party motives which rendered the Tories the advocates of triennial, or even annual parliaments. But the debate gave rise to a personal

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 431.

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altercation between Wyndham and Walpole, which has been considered, by subsequent writers, far more interesting than an examination of the nature of the question upon which it arose. It was an easy transition from declamation against the evil of corruption to indignant reprehension of the minister, who was accused of maintaining himself in office by its influence. “We have been told, sir,” remarked Wyndham, “in this house, that no faith is to be given to prophecies ; therefore, I shall not pretend to prophecy. But I may suppose a case which, though it has not yet happened, may possibly happen. Let us then suppose, sir, a man abandoned to all notions of virtue or honour, of no great family, of but a mean fortune, raised to be chief minister of state by the concurrence of many whimsical events, afraid, or unwilling, to trust any but creatures of his own making, and most of them equally abandoned to all notions of virtue or honour ; ignorant of the true interest of his country, and consulting nothing but that of enriching and aggrandizing himself and his favourites ; in foreign affairs, trusting to none but such whose education makes it impossible for them to have such knowledge, or such as can either be of service to their country or give any weight or credit to their negotiations. Let us suppose the true interest of the nation by such means neglected or misunderstood ; her honour and credit lost, her trade

insulted, her merchants plundered, and her sailors murdered ; and all these things overlooked, only for fear his administration should be endangered. Suppose him next possessed of great wealth, the plunder of the nation, with a parliament of his own choosing, most of their seats purchased, and their votes bought at the expense of the public treasure. In such a parliament let us suppose attempts made to inquire into his conduct, or to relieve the nation from the distress he has brought upon it ; and when lights proper for attaining those ends are called for, not, perhaps, for the information of the particular gentlemen who call for them, but because nothing can be done in a parliamentary way till these things be in a proper way laid before parliament ; suppose these lights refused, these reasonable requests rejected, by a corrupt majority of his creatures, whom he retains in daily pay, or engages in his particular interest, by granting them those posts and places which ought never to be given to any but for the good of the public. Upon this scandalous victory let us suppose this chief minister pluming himself in defiances, because he finds he has got a parliament like a packed jury, ready to quit him at all adventures. Let us, further, suppose him arrived to that degree of insolence and arrogance as to domineer over all the men of ancient families, all the men of sense, figure, or fortune, in the nation ; and, as he has no virtue

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of his own, ridiculing it in others, and endeavouring to destroy or corrupt it in all.

“ I am still not prophesying, sir, I am only supposing ; and the case I am going to suppose I hope will never happen ; but, with such a minister and such a parliament, let us suppose a prince upon the throne, either for want of true information or for some other reason, ignorant and unacquainted with the inclinations and the interest of his people, weak, and hurried away by unbounded ambition and insatiable avarice. This case, sir, has never yet happened in this nation ; I hope, I say, it never will exist ; but, as it is possible it may, could there any greater curse happen to a nation than such a prince on the throne, advised, and solely advised, by such a minister, and that minister supported by such a parliament.”*

Walpole answered this attack, not by retorting his personal abuse upon the assailant, but by directing his eloquence against the unseen magician who conjured up these stories and suggested these onsets. The life and character of Bolingbroke formed a plausible theme for invective, and, although that veteran party leader was grown too callous, from long habit, to feel or care for the most eloquent abuse, Walpole well knew that an arrow shot towards that mark would be followed, not only by the acclamations

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 464.

of the ministerial party, but also by the secret sympathy of a large section of the opposition: he well knew, also, how to make it glance from the shield he could not hope to penetrate, and wound and rankle in the body of its followers. This was the minister's reply.

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“ Sir, I do assure you, I did not intend to have troubled you in this debate, but such incidents now generally happen towards the end of our debates, nothing at all relating to the subject, and gentlemen make such suppositions, meaning some person, or perhaps, as they say, no person now in being, and talk so much of wicked ministers, domineering ministers, ministers pluming themselves in defiances; which terms, and the like, have been of late so much made use of in this house, that if they really mean nobody either in the house or out of it, yet it must be supposed they, at least, mean to call upon some gentleman in this house to make them a reply; and, therefore, I hope I may be allowed to draw a picture in my turn; and I may likewise say, that I do not mean to give a description of any particular person now in being. When gentlemen talk of ministers abandoned to all sense of virtue or honour, other gentlemen may, I am sure, with equal justice, and I think more justly, speak of anti-ministers and mock patriots, who never had either virtue or honour, but, in the course of their opposition, are actuated only

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by motives of envy and of resentment against those who have disappointed them in their victory, or may not, perhaps, have complied with all their desires.

“ But now, sir, let me, too, suppose, and the house being cleared I am sure no person that hears me can come within the description of the person I am to suppose. Let us suppose, in this or some other unfortunate country, an anti-minister, who thinks himself a person of so great and extensive parts, and of so many eminent qualifications, that he looks upon himself as the only person in the kingdom capable to conduct the public affairs of the nation, and therefore christening every other gentleman, who has the honour to be employed in the administration, by the name of blunderer. Suppose this fine gentleman lucky enough to have gained over to his party some persons really of fine parts, of ancient families, and of great fortunes, and others of desperate views, arising from disappointed and malicious hearts; all these gentlemen, with respect to their political behaviour, moved by him, and by him solely; all they say, either in private or public, being only a repetition of the words he has put into their mouths, and a spitting out that venom which he has infused into them; and yet we may suppose this leader not really liked by any, even of those who blindly follow him, and hated by all the rest of mankind. We will suppose this anti-minister to be in a country where he really

ought not to be, and where he could not have been but by an effect of too much goodness and mercy ; yet endeavouring, with all his might and all his art, to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed. In that country let us suppose him continually contracting friendships and familiarities with the ambassadors of those princes who, at the time, happen to be most at enmity with his own ; and if at any time it should happen to be for the interest of any of those foreign ministers to have a secret divulged to them, which might be highly prejudicial to his native country, as well as to all its friends, I suppose this foreign minister applying to him, and he answering, ‘ I will endeavour to procure it for you.’ Upon this he puts a speech or two in the mouths of some of his creatures, or some of his new converts ; what he wants is moved for in parliament, and when so reasonable a request as this is refused, suppose him, and his creatures and tools, by his advice, spreading the alarm over the whole nation, and crying out, ‘ Gentlemen, our country is at present involved in many dangerous difficulties, all which we would have extricated you from, but a wicked minister and a corrupt majority refused us the proper materials ; and upon this scandalous victory, this minister became so insolent, as to plume himself in defiance.’ Let us, further, suppose this anti-minister to have travelled, and at every court where he was, thinking himself the

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greatest minister, and making it his trade to betray the secrets of every master he ever served. I could carry my suppositions a great deal further, and I may say I mean no person now in being; but if we can suppose such a one, can there be imagined a greater disgrace to human nature than such a wretch as this?"*

But this personal altercation, as Mr. Henry Pelham sensibly remarked, was certainly foreign to the question in debate. It is very improbable that either orator obtained a single convert. As a gladiatorial display, Walpole, certainly, had the advantage, if we look at him merely as a Whig leader fighting for the Whigs, for Wyndham's conduct was in this respect imprudent, since his highly indecent attack upon the king strengthened George's dislike of the Tories into hatred. Pulteney appeared in this debate with evident reluctance; nor did he rise at all until Sir John Barnard covertly reproached him and his friends, by expressing his wonder that so many members, who were accustomed to take prominent parts in the debates, were then silent.

This Sir John Barnard was by no means the least dangerous of Walpole's opponents. He was a merchant of very moderate fortune, whose ability, fortunately, discovered to his fellow-citizens, had placed him in parliament, and whose experience, sterling

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix.

sense, and incorruptible integrity had obtained him a degree of influence which many more brilliant speakers strove for in vain. The occasion which made known the extent of Barnard's powers, occurred upon the introduction of a bill in the house of lords, intimately affecting the interests of the wine trade. The parties threatened by the bill united to oppose it; and Barnard was, without his knowledge, chosen to state their case to the house. Such anecdotes are seldom thought perfect unless ornamented with some flagrant improbability: accordingly, it is said that the deputy, thus chosen, knew nothing of the merits of the cause he was to plead until the evening before the morning for which the discussion was fixed. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, the display he made was so astonishing, that his reputation was immediately established. Popular favour, so often courted in vain, pursued the unambitious merchant; his admirers placed him in nomination for the city of London, at a time when a close struggle was expected and ensued. Barnard was returned to parliament, and soon discovered that he was the only member in the house of commons who could cope with the minister in questions of finance. He took his seat in the year 1722; and, for some time, appeared determined to preserve the character of an independent member, watching, without deference to party, the commercial interests of the nation. But

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such a member was too important to be neglected by the opposition. Flattered by the attention he received, and proud to find himself contesting with applause that department of statesmanship in which Walpole had been deemed unapproachable, Barnard gradually approached within the influence of faction, and was immediately hurried within its vortex. In 1733, he moved the amendment to the address, and his name occurs throughout that session among the opposition speakers. He made himself particularly conspicuous in resisting the Excise bill, and it was he who aroused the indignation of the populace against that part of the minister's speech, in which he termed the crowds which then surrounded the house of parliament, "sturdy beggars." Barnard presented the petition which was used as the means of resuscitating this agitation, and he zealously joined in the proposition to render the army independent of the crown. He now appeared among the speakers for the repeal of the Septennial bill. To Walpole's frequent observation, "Every man has his price," it was once triumphantly objected, "What, then, is Sir John Barnard's?"—"Popularity,"* was the minister's reply. His constant and undeviating opposition seems to justify the remark. The confession of an opponent to the power of his hero is so valuable to

* Memoirs of the late Sir John Barnard, page 12.

a biographer, that the recorded instances grow numerous, and public men obtain credit after death, for a candour which they were never suspected of possessing while alive. Thus Walpole is said to have declared, that he dreaded Pulteney's tongue more than another man's sword; but varying his opinion in favour of Barnard, he is also said to have laughed at those who praised the speeches of Pulteney, and to have observed that, when he had answered Sir John Barnard and Lord Polwarth he thought he had concluded the debate.* The eulogist of Barnard has preserved another tribute from Walpole. "Riding out on the same day, in two parties, they happened to come where only a narrow close prevented their view of each other. Mr. Barnard, talking with his company, was overheard; and the gentleman of the other party said, 'Whose voice is that?' Sir Robert Walpole replied, 'Do not you know? It is one I shall never forget—I have often felt its power.' Upon meeting at the end of the lane, Sir Robert Walpole, with that enchanting courtesy he possessed, saluting Mr. Barnard, told him what had passed."†

Barnard's power lay in his being a practical speaker, "He had not," says speaker Onslow,‡ with whom this member was a great favourite, "the advantages

* Coxe.

‡ Remarks on the Conduct of

† Memoir of the late Sir John the Opposition.

Barnard, p. 8.

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of learning, language, or manner, to ornament or set off his natural or acquired endowments, the latter of which lay chiefly in the knowledge of trade, its foundation and extent, and of the whole circle of taxes, funds, money, and credit; and in this it was that he chiefly affected and hurt Sir Robert, though seldom with any real superiority."

Barnard, although attached to the Whig section of the opposition, and fervently professing the general principles of that party, was free from the difficulty which oppressed so many of his friends. He had not been in parliament when the Septennial bill had been proposed by Whigs and supported by Tory arguments. He, therefore, had to bear no charge of inconsistency; he had no former speech to explain away; no change of sentiment to palliate or defend. "The only effectual method, sir," he said, "of preventing fatal effects is to restore annual elections; the consequence of which will be, that none but country gentlemen and those who have a natural interest in the place will ever appear as candidates."* It argues but little for the shrewdness which is attributed to Barnard that he, one of the representatives of the trade and commerce of the country, should wish to see it ruled only by an assembly of agriculturists, and leaving them the power to compel,

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 449.

should seek to withdraw from his own party the power to persuade. The motion was negatived by a majority of two hundred and sixty-seven to one hundred and eighty-four.

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On the 16th of May, the parliament was prorogued; and on the 18th of April, it was dissolved by proclamation.

CHAPTER XI.

Preparations of the parties for the general election—Progress of elections—Their result—Motion for repeal of the Test act—Biographical anecdotes of Lord Polwarth—The Quaker's bill defeated—Resentment of Walpole.

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THE whole power of the ministry was immediately brought to bear upon the elections, and the crisis was so important that Walpole thought no personal sacrifices too great. It is said that he advanced from his private fortune no less a sum than £60,000 towards the contest.* The power of the opposition was, indeed, very formidable ; and, of course no topic likely to benefit their cause was overlooked.

The question of foreign policy is always an inexhaustible magazine of materials for opposition : it is a subject upon which few men even of the educated

* Coxe upon the authority of Etough.

portion of the nation are capable of judging ; yet it is one upon which the most ignorant seldom doubts his own infallibility. A state of hostility requires no declamation to raise from it discontent ; the increased taxation, injury to trade, and occasional disasters which must attend the most successful war, are fruitful sources of dissatisfaction. Peace is prolific in topics of opposition ; for, upon a cursory review of our parliamentary debates, it will be found, that England has never either made or preserved peace, but by forfeiting her honour and submitting to national degradation. The sentiments of a multitude are always highly chivalrous—the sentiments of individuals are *naturally* so ; these latter are restrained by personal interests ; but a fluctuating multitude, composed of members who incur no distinct responsibility, can afford to laugh at the idea of prudence, and give the reins to their enthusiasm. The debates to which I have just alluded show that there has never been any lack of persons to take advantage of this ignorance.

Walpole felt the effect of this excitability during the elections. He had striven, against the opinions of several of his colleagues, against the avowed wishes of the king, and even of the queen, to prevent England being plunged into a war merely to sustain the obstinacy of the emperor, and to give a king to Poland. The same men who, had he succumbed

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to the court and called for war supplies, would have been vehement in their denunciations of his German policy, now complained that the minister had compromised the honour of his country—a charge which had, and always must have considerable effect upon English electors.

As the contest proceeded, Walpole and his supporters became more sanguine. On the 6th of May, Sir Charles Wager writes to Horace Walpole, “We cast the elections up, the other day, at Sir Robert Walpole’s, and then we had gained nine upon the balance more than we had in the last parliament; and I have reckoned three gained since, and I suppose we shall still gain, so that your majority will be rather too great than too small.”

This expectation was not fulfilled: the most desperate exertions could not avert several signal defeats. Even in Walpole’s own county Coke and Morden, men whose personal influence and hereditary claims should alone have ensured their return, were, after an expenditure of £10,000, beaten by the Tory candidates. The Whigs, nevertheless, could count a considerable majority. The Duke of Newcastle, writing to Horace Walpole, dwells much upon their success in Sussex, and enumerates Kent, Cheshire, Hampshire, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, and Essex, as counties in which the ministerial candidates had already suffered defeat. “Our parliament,” he adds,

“is, I think, a good one, but by no means such a one as the queen and your brother imagine. It will require great care, attention, and management, to set out right, and keep people in good humour.”*

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Walpole could, however, have better spared twenty members to the opposition than endure the presence of two or three men who were now, for the first time, returned to parliament, but whose unknown names were heard with indifference during the progress of the elections. They did not remain long thus undistinguished.

The strength of the opposition appears in nothing more conspicuously than the fact, that the contested elections were decided in the house almost as frequently against as for the administration; a circumstance which by no means proves that the decisions upon individual cases were at all influenced by any application of the scales of justice. In the lords the opposition was particularly violent, but their number less formidable. The Scotch lords, who had been driven from their places, were very indignant that

* The duke could not yet reckon the extent of their ill success, for he says, “Norfolk is by this time over. I know not the event; but I am not in much pain about it.” The counties have always been the strong holds of the Tories, and as these elections were commonly held after those for the boroughs, the list of opposition triumphs came forth in a mass. The opposition were equally confident. We are two hundred and fifty in the commons, said Chesterfield; a number which, with proper management, cannot long remain a minority.—*Marchmont Papers.*

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their body should have adopted the list of representative peers submitted to them by the government. An event which, however inconvenient to those who were now for the first time omitted, was far too frequent to excite surprise, and had been formerly found too advantageous to themselves to form a just subject for their reprehension.*

In the session of 1736, a motion was made on behalf of the dissenters for a repeal of the Test act; a circumstance which occasioned no small embarrassment to the minister and his supporters. Walpole had long counted the Protestant dissenters among the most active and useful of his friends; and he had retained them by courteous language and repeated, but always deferred, promises; promises which, extending no further than that he would be ready to serve them at a proper time, were easily postponed and plausibly evaded. They had been continually negotiating with the minister for the removal of their disabilities, since 1732, when they were told that it was not then a proper time, because the application came too late; that it would be a short session, that the business of

* The Earl of Marchmont, what not that invention could writing just before the election, reach. *Those that, till now, have says, "There has been great pains been known and declared enemies to taken by the agent here; money the present establishment are caught given, promises of more money, of by them."* — Marchmont Papers. This is an unwilling eulogy of acts of grace, of reversals of attainders made, threats used, and Walpole's policy.

it was already laid, and, therefore, would not admit of interruption by any thing else. The application was repeated in the succeeding year, but with a similar event. The excuse then was, that a new parliament was about to be called, and that the agitation of such a question might be of dangerous consequence at the elections; and therefore, though it was a reasonable thing, yet it was *a very improper time* to push it. The dissenters submitted with such evident reluctance, that Walpole was afraid they were about to desert him. He sent, therefore, for those to whom the negotiation was intrusted, and told them, that “he was in their power, that they might ruin him, and that he could not choose a parliament without their assistance; but, if they would give him their interest, they might depend upon his utmost endeavours to serve them.”* This speech answered his purpose. The teachers and leaders of the dissenters about London were immediately con-

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* These promises were repeated in the ministerial papers, the London Journal and the Gazetteer. “The Whigs in his majesty’s service, who have ever been the most hearty friends and supporters of the Protestant dissenters, desire to give them all reasonable satisfaction, by repealing or explaining the Tests, so that the Protestant dissenters may not be excluded by them. To this end the administration desire the Protestant dissenters to choose their known and unsuspected friends members of the ensuing parliament, that the administration may not be distressed in attempting to gain them such an indulgence, either through the power of a Tory faction, or through the combination of veteran Tories and apostate Whigs.”

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At the meeting of this parliament the claims of the dissenters were, of course, more confidently put forward. But the affairs of Europe were now unsettled—the high church party had recently discovered that popery was gaining ground in the kingdom—no time could be more improper for considering their case.

These repeated disappointments taught the dissenters that they must rely upon their own efforts for success. Previous to the meeting of parliament in this year, they signified their intention of bringing on the question, and were told by Walpole that if they did so, he should be obliged to oppose them with his whole strength. They persevered. A prolonged and important debate ensued, the report of which is, as it comes to us, quite useless, from the arguments of the different speakers upon the same side being all mingled into one mass. From a passage in the *Craftsman*, it appears that Walpole denied that he had ever promised to serve the dissenters in this particular ;* but Tindal, on the contrary, affirms that, in his speech against the motion,

* *Craftsman*, No. 509.

he expressed himself so cautiously, with regard to the church, and so affectionately with regard to the dissenters, that neither party had cause to complain of him." The motion was negatived by two hundred and fifty-one against one hundred and twenty-three.

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If this motion was embarrassing to the minister it was no less so to the opposition; it brought forth, very conspicuously, the various principles of its members. The names of the speakers discover the confusion which it caused in the parties.* The opposition Whigs supported the dissenters, although so little did Pulteney and the usual leaders of their band like the debate, that Mr. Plumer and the young Lord Polwarth were intrusted with its management. The Tories, on the contrary, now voted with the minister, and Shippen and Walpole were again united in the cause of intolerance. It was by their assistance that the minister triumphed, for many of his ordinary supporters now divided against him.

Walpole's conduct, upon this occasion, was entirely in unison with his general character and policy. He remembered the effects of the impeachment of Sacheverell, and he shrunk from an attempt which would have revived, in all its potency, the cry of, "The church is in danger." He had been successful

* The Craftsman formally declined giving any opinion upon the general question. It was content to abuse Walpole for breach of faith, and ingratitude.

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in his endeavours to reconcile the Tories to the present dynasty ; he feared to shock them by a proposition which they considered little less than impious.

The opposition of the clergy was now so languid that it was nearly counterpoised by the skilful use of the ministerial patronage ; he dreaded to arouse their slumbering energies, by an attack upon a stronghold, which they looked upon as essential to their preservation. No man knew better than Walpole the resources of his party. He knew that their strength lay in possession ; if once driven from the position they then held, it would be very long before they would be able to storm it when garrisoned by Tories. He did not renounce the tolerant principle of his party ; but he would not avow it when it must prove their destruction. The motives of the minister are well-expressed in an article which appeared, during the agitation of this question, in one of those periodicals which were conducted under his immediate superintendence. “If the dissenter,” says the minister, for we may consider it as his language, “hath the gift of common sense, he will carry his claim of indulgence no further than may be compatible with the genius and circumstances of the people ; he will have the wisdom to insist on no other demands of right than what he may probably maintain against the power of the church and reconcile to the opinion of the common people. He will rather wait till the

former have less dominion, and the latter fewer prejudices, before he contends for full and perfect liberty; since to set up his scheme, while such power remains unbroken and such bigotry unconvinced, must draw the united violence of both upon him, and probably end in the destruction of his beloved cause.”*

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But although Walpole refused to remove the yoke, he endeavoured to render it less galling. At the commencement of the present reign, a bill was introduced to indemnify the persons who had exercised public functions without complying with the provisions of the Test act; and this measure was, with a few exceptions, renewed every year. Upon a reference to the journals it appears, that the bill, when first introduced, passed both houses without opposition; a circumstance so extraordinary, in a measure of such importance, that it can only be accounted for by supposing that the minister made the assent of the high church party to this bill the price of his opposition to any permanent enactment. The Tories were satisfied with retaining a power, which, in these days of adversity, they could not hope to exercise.

The conduct of the Whigs upon this occasion was that rather of prudent than of lofty-minded men. But it is a melancholy fact, that the chivalrous honour, unswerving regard to principle, and recklessness of

* Daily Gazetteer, No. 227.

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consequences, so admirable in private life, utterly disqualify their possessors for the government of a free country. The statesman, like the surgeon, must often inflict an evil to prevent a greater. *Fiat justitia ruat cælum* is imperative upon individuals, it is enthusiasm, incompetence, or even madness in a statesman.

The debate upon the Test act, introduced to the notice of the house of commons, Hugh, Lord Polwarth, already mentioned as honourably associated with Sir John Barnard, in the compliment said to have been paid them by Sir Robert Walpole.

Lord Polwarth was the third son of Alexander, Earl of Marchmont, but by the death of his two elder brothers in the same year (1724) he became heir to the earldom. The earl of Marchmont was one of those Scotch noblemen who had been dismissed their office for caballing against Walpole, and who, by the influence of that minister, had been excluded from the house of lords upon the recent election. To revenge the indignity he had suffered, he obtained the return of Lord Polwarth for Berwick upon Tweed, and of Alexander Hume Campbell his twin brother, for Berwickshire. From the manner in which Lord Polwarth is spoken of by Walpole, it appears that the force of his speeches lay in the sound argument, great information and extensive knowledge of the subject which they displayed. That he was a very eloquent

speaker, or gifted with the brilliant abilities and oratorical talents which some writers have bestowed upon him is highly improbable. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who deals out panegyric impartially to each party, after saying of Mr. Samuel Sandys, "He is not reckoned the most graceful speaker in the house, but what he speaks is clear, strong, and distinct," remarks of Polwarth, "He seems to form himself entirely upon the model of the last mentioned member, by whom he has been instructed in all the different branches of senatorial duty. Though young, yet he gives the most intense application of any member in the house, except Mr. Sandys, and has improved a great stock of natural parts and eloquence, by his study of the ancients and the histories of other countries."*

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Lord Polwarth entered the house of commons with the somewhat unusual acquisition of a knowledge of the civil and Scotch laws. While yet a younger son, both he and his twin brother were intended by their father for the bar, and they studied with that view

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. x., translated the terms Hurgo and p. 230. These sketches are disguised under the title of "Characters of the Grandees, Senators, &c. of Lilliput." I have in the text, Clinab, and the names Polgarth and Salvem Snadsy; which last, although sufficiently intelligible at the time, is not quite so at present.

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at Utrecht and Francker. The younger, Alexander pursued his profession.*

In atonement for his rigid opposition to the claims of the great body of dissenters, Walpole undertook to protect one section of them, the Quakers, from the vexatious persecution they suffered from the clergy. The bill he introduced only provided that the tithes and church dues, which they conscientiously refused to pay, should, when the amount was not liti-

* If the likeness between the nobleman, upon the subject of a law-suit in which he was interested and the advocate had been retained. After some time spent in conversation, Ramsay came up, and addressing Alexander as Lord Polwarth, thanked him warmly for his exertions in his favour. The barrister was too sensible of his own remissness to point out the error, and he let the author go away undeceived. No sooner was he gone, than the nobleman, who was equally intimate with both the brothers, exclaimed, "My dear lord, I entreat your pardon for my extreme stupidity, I took you for your brother, and have been thus annoying you with my tiresome law-suit, on which you have heard me with so much patience."

gated, be levied by a summary process before two justices of the peace. This appears to be no great indulgence, but it was regarded as a very valuable boon by those who asked it. They complained that they had undergone grievous sufferings by prosecutions in the exchequer, ecclesiastical, and other courts, to the imprisonment of their persons, and the impoverishing and ruin of them and their families. Instances of vindictive suits were so recent and so notorious, that the measure was opposed in the commons with little success, it passed by a majority of 164 to 48.

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The power to persecute was never yielded without a struggle: the bishops sounded the alarm, and when the bill reached the lords, the whole clergy were arrayed against it. The opposition was led by Gibson, Bishop of London, hitherto Walpole's chief counsellor upon ecclesiastical affairs, and so highly in his favour, that he was taunted by Whiston as the heir-apparent to the see of Canterbury. This prelate having stirred up the clergy to petition to be heard by counsel against the bill, repaired to the house at the head of fourteen of his brethren, to give effect to the results of his agitation. He was joined by Lord Hardwicke, and a few other law lords who trembled to see the shadow of innovation resting upon the walls of Westminster. These men were influenced by prejudices which professional habit had rendered strong, and

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age inveterate ; but the conduct of the clergy had no such excuse ; their privileges were untouched, their legitimate power was not attacked, their pecuniary interests were decidedly promoted by the bill. Instead of proceedings of a considerable duration, ruinous expense, and uncertain event, they were offered a remedy, prompt, simple, and certain. They refused it, because they had more pleasure in the ruin of a schismatic who thought the taking of tithe an extortion, than they had in the receipt of the amount. It is a fearful sight to behold the ministers of a Christian church, standing forth before their brethren to claim a power that could be only useful to gratify the darkest and most malignant passions of our nature. Fifteen bishops divided against this bill, not one for it. It was rejected by 54 votes against 35.

Walpole, whose genius was certainly not of an abstract order, could not understand why men should wish to persecute without an object. Gibson's conduct upon this occasion lost him the friendship of the minister, and the archiepiscopal mitre which he had considered as his own, was, when a vacancy occurred, conferred on Potter.*

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 1220. Coxe's Memoirs of Walpole.

CHAPTER XII.

Biographical anecdotes of Frederick Prince of Wales—His friends—
 Biographical anecdotes of George Lyttelton—Of the Grenvilles—
 Of William Pitt.

LORD CARTERET seems to have spoken in the spirit of prophecy, when he said, upon the occasion of the quarrel between George I. and his son, “This family has quarrelled, and will quarrel from generation to generation.” It has been already remarked, that a sufficient cause for the perpetuity of such differences, is found in the existence of two antagonist national parties. George II. knew by experience, that its action could only be suspended by keeping his son beyond the sphere of its influence.

Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, was born in 1707. Notwithstanding the censure of the opposition, and the remonstrances even of his ministers, the king was resolved that he should complete his

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education in Hanover. The education he there received was not that which was the most adapted to a future king of England; when it was completed, he was as ignorant of the manners and constitution of his country as his grandfather had been, and although the sceptre had been held by two generations of the new dynasty, the language of the next heir still pronounced him a foreigner. His youthful studies had, nevertheless, taught Frederick some knowledge of the arts, and had inspired him with some taste for literature. He was a youth of feeling and sentiment, and although impregnated with much of the jealousy and some of the obstinacy of his ancestors, he was decidedly superior to the ordinary herd of German princes.

During the reign of George I., a negotiation had been opened for a marriage between this prince and the princess royal of Prussia, a scheme which was chiefly supported by the Queen of Prussia, who, being also a daughter of George I., naturally felt anxious to unite interests that were both so dear to her. The continual changes which at this time took place in our foreign relations, and the conduct of Frederick William, King of Prussia, in seceding from the Treaty of Hanover, interrupted, or at least delayed the negotiation until the death of George I. placed the prince under the control of his father. The affair was now desperate. Frederick William and George II.,

although educated together, and connected by the marriage of the former with the sister of the latter, had conceived an early and enduring hatred for each other. A puerile and contemptible, but often an efficient reason for a change in national policy. This mutual dislike was manifested in their ordinary conversation. Frederick spoke of the King of England as “*Mon frère le Comédien*,” and George of the King of Prussia, as “*Mon frère le Sergent*.”* Frederick had still no objection to the proposed alliance, but he refused to sacrifice to it his school-boy enmity. He joined the allies of Vienna in opposition to those of Hanover, and when his side was thus taken, he began to arrange an alliance for his daughter more in consonance with his present policy.

But in the mean time the Prince of Wales and the princess had become intimate, and had conceived a mutual attachment. The queen disappointed in her endeavours to conquer the enmity of the fathers, encouraged and stimulated the affection of the children. She succeeded so far, that the prince abandoning himself to his passions, and rendered desperate by the negotiations going on for the marriage of the princess with another, sent privately to the queen, requesting permission to repair in disguise to Berlin,

* *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Brandebourg*, tom. iii., p. 58.

— 738. and secretly espouse her daughter. The message was received by his aunt with the greatest exultation; the king came from his hunting seat to Berlin, all things were prepared for the ceremony, and the bridegroom was hourly expected. But the prince had enjoined secrecy as to the subject of his message, an injunction which the weak woman to whom it was sent, thought so unnecessary, or so impossible to obey, that she immediately revealed the secret to Dubourgeay, the English envoy; of course accompanying it in her turn with a condition, that it must be kept inviolate. Dubourgeay, in execution of his duty, instantly despatched a courier to England with the tidings; and the prince was astonished by receiving, while at a ball, a peremptory order for his immediate appearance in England. He obeyed the command; he set out that same night with only two attendants, and appeared at St. James's. There he was received with rigid coldness by his father, and left in a country and a court where all was strange, and where the eyes of every courtier were averted from him, to choose his friends as he might, and to adopt the principles which chance might recommend.

The result it was not difficult to predict. Avoided by all those who dreaded his father's frown, he was open to the advances of those who sought in him an instrument of opposition to his father's government.

A little time brought with it a knowledge of our manners, and a perfect acquaintance with our language. An estimation of his own high dignity and power in the state, was not slow to follow. The dread he had entertained for his father's authority gradually decreased, he beheld in him an estranged and authoritative parent, but he no longer looked upon him as an irresistible master. The consequences of this awakened spirit of active hostility were seen in the names of the men by whom he was surrounded. Again, there was a rival court within the precincts of St. James's. The insidious and intriguing, but highly gifted Carteret;* the courtly Chesterfield; Pulteney, brilliant in conversation as in debate; Wyndham, who preferred the allegiance of the old Jacobites to a Tory prince; above, and revered by, all these, the "all accomplished Bolingbroke," who conversed in language as elegant as that he wrote, and whose lightest table-talk, transferred to paper, would, in its style and matter, have borne the test of the most searching criticism;† these, the veteran leaders of the united opposition, formed the society in which the young prince lived;‡ these were his political tutors, and his personal friends. Truly, the

* The Marchmont Papers, if the history of his public life, fully other proof were wanting beyond justify these epithets.

† Chesterfield's Letters to his Son—Characters.

‡ Bolingbroke left England early in 1735.

genius of the age appears to have been monopolized by this opposition. Where can we hope again to find collected such a galaxy of sterling talent! There was not only wisdom to impart, but art to win, learning to illustrate, and eloquence to persuade. All the primitive colours of political knowledge appeared to coalesce to form one stream of pure light. Swift strengthened by his writings, sentiments which his distant friends had implanted by conversation; his absence was well repaid by the presence of Pope and Thomson, who were scarcely necessary to complete the charm.

But Frederick was not the only pupil in this school of politics; he had younger friends and companions, who, prepared by the same tutelage, were sent into the house of commons, to herald the advent of a new generation. Of these, Polwarth has been already mentioned; the delicate and sensitive George Lyttelton must be noted as another.

Lyttelton is already rendered well known by the pen of Johnson, who has unwillingly allowed him a niche in the gallery of British poets. But his station as a political leader is higher than his rank as a poet. George Lyttelton was the descendant of an ancient family; the son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, and heir to his baronetcy. He was born two months before the usual time, and was at first thought to be dead. The weak and sickly child was reared with the

greatest difficulty, but he soon discovered abilities which might compensate him for his deficiency in physical strength. At Eton he established a claim to mental superiority; and removing thence, while yet a boy, to Christ Church, Oxford, he evinced his early ambition to be thought a poet, by putting forth some verses upon Blenheim. Several other productions were the results of his short residence at Oxford. When yet only nineteen years of age, he left the university for the continent, but quickly returned; and favoured by the influence of his father, who was one of the lords of the treasury, obtained the office of page. But Lyttelton, while aspiring to the honours of poesy, had sought the acquaintance of Pope, who encouraged his advances and introduced him to Bolingbroke. Once within the magic circle of that society, neither the calls of interest, nor the exercise of paternal authority could free him from its influence. "He discovers a genius," remarks the same contemporary writer, from whom I have quoted for the sketch of Polwarth, "that will one day fit him for the management of the greatest public concerns. He entered into the senate at an age when others are scarcely fit for the university, and has distinguished himself ever since by a zealous opposition upon all occasions against the minister. He possesses all the qualifications of an accomplished scholar, and these he makes subservient to the duty of a senator. He is

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highly in favour with the prince ; and all the virtuosi and ingenious in the liberal arts, particularly in poetry, expect to see the golden age revive when he shall come into court.” George Lyttelton was one of the personal friends and ordinary companions of the prince.

Prominent in the same class were Lyttelton’s cousins, Richard, George, and James Grenville, the nephews of Lord Cobham, and grandsons of the same Sir Temple, who has already figured in these pages as a conspicuous advocate of the Exclusion bill. Richard Grenville, afterwards Earl Temple, was the eldest son of Richard Grenville, of Wotton, upon whose widow, long afterwards devolved, by the limitations of the patent, the honours of Lord Cobham. He was born in the year 1711, and received an education suitable to his birth, as the representative of an ancient family, and the heir to a respectable inheritance. The honours which afterwards accumulated upon him were then unexpected ; they might have contributed to the importance of his after career, but they could have no influence upon the estimation in which he was now held by the prince, and the friends who surrounded him. Richard Grenville had obtained a seat during the recent election, being returned for the town of Buckingham.*

George, the second son, was born in 1712, and

* Collins. Almon.

the narrowness of his early prospects compelled him to choose a profession. "He was bred," says Mr. Burke "to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences; a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together." Grenville's capacity was not of the highest order, he possessed, according to the same authority, "a manly understanding, a stout and resolute heart, and an application undissipated and unwearied." But his was a mind of no remarkable enlargement: it was a disposition to desire present success rather than future fame, his zeal and application promised to render his aid invaluable, when directed to a particular subject, but his mind was too microscopic for the duties of a statesman.* George Grenville was not yet in parliament. James was of less importance as a political leader, but he was not less valued by the prince as a private friend.

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But the greatest of all these, the masterspirit of the new generation yet remains behind. Among the brilliant society which thronged the apartments of the prince, was seen William Pitt, who, having obtained a seat in the house of commons, at the recent election, was repressing with difficulty his fiery

* Collins's Peerage. Burke's Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxxv., Speech on American Taxation. p. 308.

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genius, and waiting with impatience an opportunity to flesh his virgin sword.

Pitt was the senior of the majority of the youthful band, who were about to start together as competitors for fame. He was born in November, 1708, the younger son of a Cornish gentleman, who, although the representative of a family, which had been ennobled in some of its younger branches, was not possessed of sufficient affluence to encourage William to aspire to be a statesman. Pitt's education, was nevertheless equal to the part he was destined to fill. He was placed upon the foundation at Eton, and remained in that school at a time when Lyttelton, Fox, Hanbury Williams, and Henry Fielding, were his contemporaries. A community of suffering might have attracted Pitt and Lyttelton to each other, and developed the powers of each. The weak and sickly boy, who shut out from the pleasures of his comrades, devoted his play-hours to reading and rhyming, was not more helpless than Pitt, who, although robust in his constitution, had not attained his sixteenth year, when he was attacked by an hereditary gout. The power of education, is in nothing instanced so strongly as in the numerous examples we possess of mighty minds accompanied with some deformity of body or early corporeal weakness; the gout, which confined Pitt to his dame's parlour at Eton, perhaps first revealed

to him that he had powers, which might shake a senate, or direct a kingdom.

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When eighteen years old, Pitt removed from Eton to Oxford, where he became a gentleman commoner of Trinity College. While at the university he did not neglect his classical studies, for we find among the Oxford verses, written upon the death of George I., by no means the least elegant in the collection signed "Gul. Pitt." The dreadful distemper with which he was afflicted, increased during his residence at Oxford, and he attempted to fly from his enemy, or relieve the tedium of his frequent confinement, by changing the scene during his intervals of ease. He remained some time in France and Italy, but, finding the malady incurable, returned to England, and addressed himself to the pursuit of such objects as were still open to him. Pitt's patrimony, it is upon all hands admitted was small; Chesterfield, in this instance, a questionable authority, says, that it consisted only of an annuity of £100. To increase these slender means, he was compelled to make choice of a profession. Why, with his constitution, he chose the army we are not told; probably he was averse to any studies which would withdraw him from preparation for the course upon which he really intended to start. He obtained a cornetcy of horse, his first and only

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commission, and was also among the new members who had been returned to the parliament of 1735.

The Cornish boroughs, created to increase the influence of the crown, had long since sunk to swell the importance of individuals. Old Sarum belonged to Pitt's family, and its representation was of course appropriated to his elder brother. That gentleman, however, had the good fortune to be elected to the more honourable representation of Oakhampton, and having made his election for that town, William was entitled to claim the family borough. At the opening of this parliament, William Pitt, George Lyttelton, and Richard Grenville took their seats upon the same bench, and continued for years after to sit next each other in the house of commons.*

* Chesterfield's Characters — History of the Life of the Earl Characters Reviewed. Almon's of Chatham. Thackeray's Life of Anecdotes of the Earl of Chatham. the Earl of Chatham.

CHAPTER XIII.

Advance of the Whig principle—First essay of Pitt and Lyttelton in the house of commons—Attempt to obtain an independent establishment for the Prince of Wales—Secession of the Tories—Its cause—Expulsion of the Prince of Wales from the royal palace—Death of Queen Caroline.

It will be seen from this sketch of the rising race of politicians, that it was the Whig principle of government which was now gaining ground. In introducing the most valuable acquisitions of the united opposition, I am describing the first efforts of illustrious Whigs. The union of parties in the opposition was highly favourable to the dissemination of Whig principles. The spirit of Whiggism must often be tempered when its professors are in power, but true Toryism cannot show itself in opposition. Bolingbroke could not preach to the young enthusiasts, who burned to beard the minister surrounded

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by his friends, who hoped to prostrate his power by the aid of the people, and who relied upon the voice of the nation to dissipate the adverse majority which now protected their enemy—he could not preach to such men, even the mitigated doctrines of Toryism. The danger of democracy, the incompetency of the people for self-government, the necessity of keeping hermetically sealed, every channel by which the multitude might obtain access to the controlling power of the state—these would have been no grateful topics to men, who saw a king, a government, and the two houses of legislature arrayed against them. Such men could only be taught to address themselves to the people. Their youthful integrity would make them scorn to be the willing instruments of party hypocrisy—they must be themselves convinced of the truth of the popular sentiments they were to utter. When they were so convinced they were Whigs, and if their virtue proved superior to their cupidity, they would remain so. It is more easy to sow than to eradicate such seeds.

During this year the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess of Saxe-Gotha.* The circumstance

* Mr. Coxe says, “The Prince does not appear to have been the of Wales espoused the Princess of case ; for, a year afterwards, the Saxe-Gotha, in whose beauties, prince complained to Dodington, accomplishments and virtues, he that “he had sacrificed himself to forgot his former passion.”—*Life the nation, by demanding a marriage.*—*Dodington's Diary*, p. 457. of Walpole, vol. i., p. 523. This

offered an opportunity to his young friends to display their affection to his person, and to commence their opposition to the minister. The motion for an address of congratulation was made by Pulteney; it was seconded in a maiden speech by Pitt, and supported by Lyttelton, who followed his friend, and also made upon this occasion his first essay. We cannot judge the oratory displayed upon this occasion by the reports of the speeches as they have come down to us; the coarse outline remains, but the elaborate ornament and characteristic colouring are gone. One historian has furnished us with what may be considered as the judgment of their contemporaries. He says, “ Mr. Lyttelton, in some parts of his speech, showed how well he had studied Cicero; particularly in his celebrated compliment to Cæsar upon his pardoning Marcellus; but notwithstanding the whole of it was one continued though just panegyric upon their royal highnesses, it contains several severe clauses against the minister. The speech of Mr. Pitt is unmixed with any strain but that of declamation; and we have few models of antiquity more perfect in that kind; it being more ornamented than the declamations of Demosthenes, and less diffuse than those of Cicero.*

The declamation of Pitt was not less indicative of

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* Tindal.

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hostility to the court and government than the sparks of fiery indignation which scintillated from the eloquence of Lyttelton. We can find, from the meagre report of the speech, that Pitt took occasion covertly to attack the king by dwelling in polished encomium upon the dutiful conduct, the love of freedom, the constitutional principle, and the universal popularity of the prince: he set forth, in the most glowing colours, the national advantages which would arise from the alliance that had just been contracted; and while he showered praises upon the son for having sought and proposed this alliance, he coldly, nay, almost sarcastically expressed his gratitude to the father that he did not oppose the patriotic request. The morbid jealousy of George II. thrilled under the delicate touch of the orator, and as the prince acknowledged him as his advocate and his friend, the breach between the father and son was widened beyond repair.

Walpole, as he heard the voice of the new orator, admired and trembled. "We must muzzle that terrible cornet of horse!" he exclaimed to those around him; and with his usual confidence in the power of corruption, he made large offers of promotion in the army, upon condition that the new member should give up his seat in parliament.* We can imagine the answer which Pitt would

* Chesterfield's Characters Reviewed.

return to such a proposal; nor are we surprised to find that that answer called forth the last effort of ministerial wrath, and that he was suddenly deprived of his commission.* The Gazetteer, and other papers in the employ of Walpole, were instructed to pour forth all their abuse upon him; but the writers confess his importance while they attempt to deny it. He is accused of looking upon himself as a second Tully, and told that, though his neck may be as long and his body as slender, yet he must remember, that every one who has the same natural imperfections as the Roman, has not therefore the same essential perfections. These trashy personalities called forth answers from the Craftsman which are only interesting as they show how brilliant was the very commencement of the career of the Earl of Chatham.

The prince now determined to put in practice a scheme which had been several years ago suggested by Bolingbroke. This was, to apply to parliament

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* His friend Lyttelton invoked his muse upon this occasion,

“ Long had thy virtues marked thee out for fame,
Far, far superior to a cornet’s name;
This generous Walpole saw, and grieved to find
So mean a post disgraced that noble mind.
The servile standard from thy freeborn hand
He took, and bade thee lead the patriot band.”

Sir Hanbury Williams also alluded to it in his manner:

“ Sir Bob to hang, thou didst harangue;
While he in joke, the cornet broke.”

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for a jointure for his wife, and an independent allowance of £100,000 a year. Soon after his marriage, he mentioned this design to the queen, with whom he had never been a favourite; but she treated it as a jest, and laughed at the idea of so desperate and impracticable an attempt.* Bolingbroke's last advice, before his retreat into France, had been to pursue unremittingly this one favourite object, and he doubtless repeated by letter the injunction he had personally enforced.

The prince now collected his whole power for the attempt; and the present state and future prospects of the parties rendered this power by no means inconsiderable. The state of the king's health was very critical: in February, 1736, the Duchess of Marlborough writes that she had heard, from a pretty good hand, that his majesty had been worse than they cared to own; but upon remedies they applied, his fever lessened, and he was better. "However," she adds,

* The derision with which the queen treated this threat probably provoked him to proceed: he alleged this as one of the reasons of his perseverance to Dodington—Diary, p. 445. The queen became now openly his enemy; in a memorandum made at this time by the Earl of Marchmont, it is remarked, "The queen is quite furious in being disappointed in her hopes of managing the son as she did the father. She overdid and mistook her measures in keeping the son too much under; the game is not to be retrieved."—*Marchmont Papers*, vol. ii., p. 72.

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“the physicians say, that, if he does get over this illness, he cannot live a twelvemonth.” Upon this very occasion, she adds, “It is apprehended that the king is in so very bad a state of health that, though he has got over his illness so far as to appear in public, yet we shall not be so happy as to have him long; and every body that sees him tells me that he looks, at this time, extremely ill.”* At this time, the fact of the king being in “a languishing condition” was urged by those who tried to dissuade the prince from his project; but Frederick answered, that the king could not live many years, but might linger thus a good while, and he could not stay that while.† He first mentioned the matter to Pulteney, and desired him at once to bring it forward. That able leader delighted at a proposition so favourable to his party, immediately consented for himself, although he required to consult before he could answer for his friends: “He expressed himself so handsomely upon the first

* Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 86. Bolingbroke also says, in a letter to Wyndham, “You say, my friend, that the affair of the prince alarmed the minister purely because of the state of the king’s health in that point of time.”

It is greatly to be regretted that Bolingbroke’s papers passed into the hands of Mallet. That person destroyed every thing which there was no immediate prospect of turning into money. How clear would be all the party intrigues of this time, if we had the letters written to Bolingbroke by his friends during his residence in France.

† Dodington’s Diary, p. 445.

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notice," said the prince, "that I shall never forget it."* The Whigs of the opposition joyfully received the proposal of which Pulteney was the bearer; and Chesterfield, Carteret, and Jekyll (master of the rolls) immediately sent in their adherence. Sir William Wyndham, the leader of the Tory section, was no less ready. He replied, "that he had long desired an opportunity of showing his regard and attachment to his royal highness; that he would answer for his whole party as well as for himself; and that he was very happy that an occasion presented itself to convince his royal highness, by their zealous and hearty appearance in support of his interest, how far they were from being Jacobites, and how much they were misrepresented under that name."†

"The whole body of opposition being thus pledged, he next attempted to gain over George Dodington, who, although holding office under Walpole, was but a wavering adherent, and commanding six votes in the house of commons was worthy of some solicitation in an affair in which the division promised to be more than usually close. That skilful politician, however, had no inclination to sacrifice his present advantages, and to render his hopes of advancement desperate

* Dodington's Diary, p. 443. and even spoke against it.—See Jekyll, however, when the motion the Parl. Hist., vol., ix., p. 1147. came on in the commons, voted, † Dodington's Diary, p. 444.

during the lifetime of the present king: he firmly refused to become a party to the measure; but he agreed to keep the secret. It is a singular proof either of the confidence or carelessness of Walpole, that the whole plan of this measure was arranged before he was aware that it was in agitation. About a fortnight before the motion was appointed to be made, the design became public; and the minister was so alarmed, that he persuaded the king to send the lords of his council to his son with a message, which, although imperious and unbending in its language, was not so in its matter, since it promised him an increase of revenue for himself and a jointure for his wife, upon his abandoning the threatened motion. But it was now too late. The prince replied, that, "as to the message, the affair was now out of his hands, and therefore he could give no answer to it."

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On the 22d of February, Pulteney brought forward the motion in the house of commons. Having vindicated the right of the commons to examine into the appropriation of sums voted by them for a specific purpose, the orator proceeded to cite precedents in favour of the motion he was about to make, and ransacked the English history for instances in favour of his position that the Prince of Wales always had and ought to have a sufficient provision, settled upon him in such a manner, as to render him as independent of the crown as any other subject can be. He argued

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that such a provision was wise as well as customary ; that the civil list of his present majesty had been increased, in order that he might be enabled to pay £100,000 a year to the Prince of Wales ; and that to the allowance thus mentioned by the king and sanctioned by parliament, the prince was in law and in equity entitled. Walpole replied. He began by complaining of the conduct of those who brought forward the motion—"a motion which must necessarily bring every gentleman of the house under one of the greatest difficulties any man ever was or even can be in ;" he examined the precedents brought forward by Pulteney, and declared that they were either such as ought not to be followed, or such as were by no way applicable to the case then before the house. He reprobated the proposal of a parliamentary interference with the private and domestic arrangements of the monarch. "Even in private life," he said, "it is generally held to be officious and imprudent for a stranger to intermeddle in the family affairs of his neighbour without any call from the parties concerned ; if there was no breach before, it generally occasions one ; and if there was a breach, it makes it wider much oftener than it occasions a reconciliation. We ought to consider our sovereign in a two-fold respect. In all cases which regard his political and royal capacity, we have certainly a right to judge of the measures that are taken, and may recommend

what we think most expedient ; but in affairs which regard his natural and paternal capacity, we have no right to judge ; it would be officious in us to recommend, without some sort of application from him for that purpose ; and as the providing of every branch of the royal family is an affair which regards only his natural and paternal capacity, it would be officious in us—it is inconsistent with true wisdom or good policy for us—to pretend to judge or to prescribe what ought to be done, or in what manner it ought to be done.”*

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From this sketch it would appear, that no question arose during this debate which could impart to the question the quality of a touchstone of party principles. In favour of the motion appeared Pulteney, Barnard, Lyttelton, Pitt, Grenville, and Wyndham ; illustrious among a crowd of less distinguished names against it were, Walpole, Jekyll, Henry Pelham, and Sir Wm. Yonge.† On the division, thirty-five members, who had never before been known to vote against the minister, went over to the opposition.‡ The triumph of the prince appeared secure, when an event occurred which has never been satisfactorily explained, but which changed the fortune of the day. Wyndham, who had spoken in favour of the motion, left the house without voting,

* Parl. Hist., vol. ix.

‡ Dodington's Diary, Appendix,

† Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 1147. p. 469.

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and forty-five Tory members had either absented themselves from the debate altogether, or now departed with him.* In consequence of this secession, the minister obtained a majority of thirty; the numbers being two hundred and thirty-four to two hundred and four.†

We seek in vain for a reason for this sudden desertion. Mr. Coxe ascribes it to a conscientious motive, and praises the Tory party for adhering to their principles, and opposing a proposition which he considers democratical and unconstitutional. This exposition might have been satisfactory had the seceders kept themselves aloof from the affair from the commencement; but when we see them pledged by their acknowledged leader to its support, that leader enforcing it with all his eloquence upon the floor of the house of commons, and then suddenly heading the secession which left the victory to the ministerial Whigs; we naturally suspect that it was some more cogent cause than that assigned by the biographer of Walpole, which induced them to pledge themselves, and their leader to speak, on one side and act upon the other. In the absence of direct evidence it is perhaps the most probable supposition that, when

* Dodington's Diary, p. 444. his knowledge of the circumstance, Mr. Coxe says that they left the merely states that they were absent. house in a body; but Dodington, † Parl. Hist., vol. ix., p. 1147. from whom he, no doubt, received

success appeared certain, ulterior arrangements were privately discussed among the leaders, and that a dispute then arose which disgusted the Tories, and caused them to leave the house—domestic hatred is always more violent than public hostility. The letters which Bolingbroke addressed to Wyndham appear to favour this hypothesis: he is constantly lamenting the want of union in the opposition, and declares, when adverting to this very subject, that a well-arranged plan of ulterior conduct would have converted defeat into victory.* We may, at least, see in this circumstance how impossible it was for any members of the two factions cordially to coalesce, and we see, also, how small was the numerical force of the Tories in this house of commons. These forty-five members doubtless formed the core of Toryism, and it was the core only which now remained in the commons, all the unstable particles had been attracted by the influence of ministerial patronage.

The birth of the prince's first child occasioned an open rupture: the king conceived he had been treated with disrespect, and George II., who, twenty years before, had, upon a very similar occasion, been ordered by his father to leave the royal palace, now inflicted the severity he then experienced.

* Bolingbroke to Wyndham, June 9, 1737. Coxe's Life of Walpole. Correspondence, vol. iii.

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Those of the minister's adherents who held offices in the prince's household immediately resigned; and members of the opposition were installed in their places. Among other changes, Lyttelton became private secretary to the prince, and Pitt was recompensed for the loss of his commission by an appointment as groom of the bedchamber.

Lord Hardwicke, upon this occasion, attempted to prevent the public separation; but Walpole, who looked upon it as a triumph over the opposition, and the queen, who was governed by the minister and urged by her private resentment, had resolved to proceed to extremes. It was they who instigated the king to expel the prince from his palace. The death of Queen Caroline occurred about two months after this circumstance. On her death-bed she recommended the king to the protection of Walpole, a method of expressing her high opinion of his services which the minister thought dangerous to his future favour. But, although she sent the prince a formal message of forgiveness,* she refused to see him, "lest it might embarrass and irritate the king."† The death of Queen Caroline was certainly

* Coxe, upon the authority of Lord Orford.

† The prince's friends animad- of a relentless spirit. Chesterfield, verted with much justice and great in some lines written upon the occasion, speaking of Caroline's last severity upon this last testimony hours, says,

a national loss ; * for, although she was probably too implicitly guided by the minister in her judgment upon domestic affairs, her influence was the only power which could withdraw the king from his absorbed attention to his continental dominions, or preserve the minister from the necessity of spending the treasure and the blood of England upon some microscopic question of German politics.

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“ And unforgiving, unforgiven dies.”

Pope's satirical epitaph is well known :

“ Here lies, wrapped up in seven and twenty towels,
The only proof that Caroline had bowels.”

And again :

“ ——— hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts perform'd, and *ALL her children blest.*”

To neutralize these satirical attacks we have the poetical eulogy of Savage, Dodington, and Stephen Duck, and a more valuable and endearing prose panegyric from the pen of her friend, Dr. Alured Clarke.

* The king was for a long time inconsolable for his loss, and several rather pathetic ebullitions of his grief are related by Mr. Coxe. An instance is given by the Duchess

of Marlborough which savours more of the ridiculous. Some time after, the king was playing at bas-set, and a queen was turned up ; the king became greatly affected, nor could his emotion be overcome until one of the ladies proposed to throw all the queens out of the pack ; the expedient was adopted, and the king, having recovered his equanimity, continued his game.

CHAPTER XIV.

Motion to reduce the standing army—Shippen's eulogium upon Toryism—Reply to Walpole—Review of the debate.

CHAP. · THE session of 1738 commenced with a debate, in
XIV. which the principles of Whiggism and Toryism were
A. D. 1738. largely discussed, and each section of the Whig party contended that it was they alone who were true to their principles. This debate occurred upon a motion, made by the opposition, for a reduction in the standing army. Sir George Barclay opposed the ministerial estimate upon the broad principle, "that the keeping up a standing army in time of peace was a thing unknown to the laws and constitution of Britain, and destructive to the liberty of her citizens."* This speaker was supported by Shippen, who descanted upon the same topic, dated the rise of

* Parl. Hist., vol. x.

a standing army from the ninth year of the reign of William, insinuated that it was one of the productions of the revolution, and inveighed against it as subversive of the people's liberties. He then proceeded to claim for his own party the merit of having consistently advocated the principles of the revolution. "I own," he said, "that it gives me great concern to see gentlemen who have always valued themselves upon treading in the footsteps of those who brought about the revolution, act a part so inconsistent with the principles of their ancestors, by voting for this question. I know a set of men, under a different denomination, who have always been more moderate in their pretensions but more steady in their adherence to these principles. I am not at all inclined to revive any party distinctions, but, I will venture to say, sir, that, let any man compare the conduct of some gentlemen, who have affected to pass for Whigs, with that of gentlemen who have always been looked upon as Tories, he shall find the latter acting a part most consistent with the revolution principles. He will find them opposing the crown in every encroachment upon the people, and in every infringement upon the claim of right. He will never find them complimenting the crown at the expense of the people, when in post, nor distressing it by opposing any reasonable measure when out. Can some gentlemen, sir, who now affect to call them-

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selves Whigs, boast of such an uniformity of conduct? can they say that times and circumstances never influenced the measures they pursued; or that, when they were in posts, they always acted in consequence of the principles they professed when they were out? Sir, I believe I have sat long enough in this house to convince gentlemen, if there were occasion, of very great inconsistencies in certain characters."

There was much truth in the criminations thrown out against many of the Whigs, but there was something ludicrous in the claim put forward on behalf of the Tories.

The notoriously Jacobite character of Shippen enabled Walpole to reply with considerable effect, that a standing army was necessary to maintain the present family upon the throne. "No man," he continued, "of common prudence will profess himself openly a Jacobite; by so doing he not only may injure his private fortune, but he must render himself less able to do any effectual service to the cause he has embraced. Therefore there are but few such men in the kingdom. Your right Jacobite, sir, disguises his true sentiments; he roars out for revolution principles; he pretends to be a great friend to liberty, and a great admirer of our ancient constitution; and, under this pretence, there are numbers who every day endeavour to sow discontents among

the people, by persuading them that the constitution is in danger, and that they are unnecessarily loaded with many and heavy taxes." Mr. Henry Fox taunted the opposition Whigs with Shippen's eulogy upon the Tories, and called upon them, since they gloried in still acting upon Whig principles, to answer that part of his speech. But the invitation was not accepted; Lyttelton and his friends contented themselves with attacking the minister, repeating the arguments which Shippen had already stated, and repudiating the title of the ministerial party to call themselves Whigs. "Sir," said Sir John Hynde Cotton,* "I have had the honour and happiness to be intimate with many gentlemen of that denomination, I likewise, sir, have read the writings of many authors who have espoused these principles; I have sat in this house during some of the most material debates that have happened betwixt them and the Tories; and, sir, I can declare from my own experience that I never knew one, who acted on true Whig principles, vote for a standing army in time of peace. What the principles of the Whigs in former days were, sir, I can only learn from reading or information; but, sir, I have heard of Whigs who were against all unlimited votes of

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* This gentleman, although we a Tory, and even a Jacobite.—should not suspect it from the *Opinions of the Duchess of Marl-*tenour of his speech, was called *borough*, p. 62.

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credit: I have heard of Whigs who looked upon open corruption as the greatest curse that could befall any nation: I have heard of Whigs who esteemed the liberty of the press to be the most valuable privilege of a free people, and triennial parliaments the greatest bulwark of their liberties; and, sir, I have heard of a Whig administration who have resented injuries done to the trade of the nation, and who have revenged insults offered to the British flag. These, sir, are the principles, if I am rightly informed, that once characterized the true Whigs. Let gentlemen apply these characters to their present conduct, and then, laying their hands on their hearts, let them ask themselves if they are Whigs."

Sir William Yonge replied on behalf of the ministry, and Barnard and Pulteney then rose in the debate. The stinging sarcasm of the latter orator again called up Walpole, who did not forget to remind the house, that there was a time when Pulteney had put forth all his strength in favour of a proposal similar to that which he was now opposing. He concluded a powerful reply in these words: "Sir, I have known the time when gentlemen acted upon true Whig principles; and at that time, sir, they seemed to be of opinion, that the best, if not the only way to secure us from popery and arbitrary power was, by securing the present establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family. They

were then of opinion that this was best done by our keeping up a regular body of forces; and I should be glad to know if the same reasons do not subsist now as did then, or if they, who are the enemies of our present establishment have been weakened by the opposition of those gentlemen to the administration.”

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Pulteney thus pressed, appeared to be confused, he had recourse to the hackneyed excuse for inconsistency, “that, although a man’s whole life has been but one continued vote upon one side, yet, he ought neither to be ashamed nor afraid to oppose it as soon as his own judgment, or the situation of things, is altered.” Conscious that this general defence was equally available to the most patriotic and the most corrupt, he abandoned all personal defence, and rushed among the topics of popular declamation. “Establishment! government!” he exclaimed. “I know of no establishment, I know of no government, I know of no administration that ought to be kept up but for the preservation of the liberties of the people: for it is not two pence matter to me, whether the prince’s name under whom I am to be enslaved, is Thomas, James, or Richard.”

Sir William Wyndham followed, but it was only to ridicule the minister’s fears of the pretender—the spirit of the debate had evaporated; and, after Mr. Pelham and some others had spoken, the vote passed without a division.

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This was a contest carried on between Whigs : each party of the combatants were jealous of the title, and defended their right to the name. Shippen's claim in favour of the Tories, served only to embarrass his friends and to strengthen his adversaries ; Wyndham cautiously abstained from the topic. The Tories appear to have tacitly admitted that the acquisition of popularity and the active conduct of the opposition must be left to their Whig allies.

During the conduct of this debate, no sentiment fell from any of the ministerial speakers inconsistent with those principles of popular government, which had formed the original foundation of their party creed ; but on the morrow the debate was renewed upon the bringing up of the report by Colonel Mordaunt, one of those unhappy partisans, whose zeal is far more fatal to their friends than to their foes. " I have always gloried, sir," said Colonel Mordaunt, " in being thought a Whig ; I hope I shall never, by my behaviour, either in this house or without doors, give the least occasion to the world to think otherwise of me ; and for this very reason I am for keeping up an army, because I think the keeping up an army absolutely necessary for supporting the Whig interest, and preserving the peace and quiet of the people. In every dispute which has happened of late years about our army, I have looked upon the question to be chiefly, whether Whig or Tory should prevail ; and as

I have always thought, and as I believe every unprejudiced Whig in the kingdom thinks, that if the army should be disbanded, or very much reduced, the Tory interest would prevail, therefore I have generally been against such reduction, and always shall be extremely cautious of agreeing to any such proposition; nay, I am so firmly attached to the Whig interest, that if I should think four times the number of troops absolutely necessary for supporting that interest, I would be for keeping up an army four times as numerous as that we have now on foot."

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This suicidal speech was seized upon with eagerness by the opposition. Polwarth inflicted upon its author a merciless chastisement, and Pitt was aroused to inveigh against the motion; but Mordaunt was left to endure the storm he had raised, and although Sir Thomas Sanderson* made a reply to the general arguments which had been urged, no sound came from the treasury benches, which could indicate that the ministerial Whigs either avowed or favoured the sentiments expressed by their officious supporter.†

It is a flagrant instance of the partiality with

* In fact, no reply whatever was made by the ministers or any of their adherents. Sir Thomas Sanderson, although he voted in the majority on this occasion, generally acted with the opposition. Witness his speech against the Convention with Spain, *Parl. Hist.*, vol. x., p. 1259.

† *Parl. Hist.*, vol. x., pp. 375-467.

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which Smollett compiled his history, that while he extracts the arguments of the opposition upon this question, he omits all those employed by the minister and his colleagues, and substitutes as theirs the most offensive sentiments in this unsupported and tacitly repudiated speech.

Upon the abstract merits of this question there can be now no second opinion. The Jacobites, who saw in a permanent body of troops an insuperable barrier to the restoration of their king, and some of the most violent of the opposition Whigs, who so strongly panted for power, that they would gladly be borne to it upon a torrent of national calamities: these men were in earnest in the opposition. But the mere Tories and the more reasonable of the opposition Whigs, looked upon the question only as a convenient vehicle of opposition—they threw all their gaudy eloquence around it, and set it up to dazzle and attract the multitude. Sixty years anterior to this time, the existence of a standing army would have been fatal to the liberties of the country; a Whig of those days would have used the language of Pulteney and Cotton, and the whole nation which sulkily permitted Charles II. to maintain about 5000 guards, would have risen in a mass to resist an attempt to raise his levies to 17,000. But circumstances were materially altered. The army was not now a force maintained by the king out of his own

private revenues, the mere instrument of the royal will supported by the sovereign to work his purpose, and holding it as its chief duty to protect him against his parliament and his people. Instead of being an instrument of offence, it had now become a shield of safety. The dissipation of the mysterious halo which had so long surrounded the throne, required that it should be supplied by some more reasonable defence. An armed faction of Jacobites rendered a standing army necessary to our domestic peace; the modern policy of the surrounding nations, all ever ready for war, rendered an army necessary to our national existence. But still it was felt, that although an indispensable, it was also a perilous instrument, and while its direction, according to the forms of the constitution, was nominally intrusted to the crown, the power of its dissolution was retained by the parliament; the guidance of the fiery coursers was again intrusted to the charioteer who had before abused his power, but the commons held the bolt which could instantaneously arrest their career.

There was at this time no cause for national alarm at the power of the crown, nor any possibility that the military force now asked for would be abused. This debate is chiefly valuable to our purpose, as it discovers how fallen and almost forgotten were the Tory principles of government at this time, and how completely the contest was between Whig principles

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held in moderation and curbed, perhaps too tightly, by extreme caution and a timorous tenderness for ancient prejudices, and those same principles abused to purposes of private ambition, and urged to the very verge of democracy.*

* How utterly ridiculous, therefore, is the assertion of Smollett, "that the adherents of the minister fairly owned, that if the army should be disbanded or even considerably reduced, the Tory interest would prevail."

CHAPTER XV.

Popular outcry for a war with Spain—Convention—Debate upon the Convention—Secession of the opposition—Conflict between Wyndham and Walpole—Consequences of the secession—Attempt to repeal the Test act—Opposed by the Whig ministers.

THE all-absorbing question which engaged the nation during the years 1738 and 1739, was that of the quarrel with Spain; a question, which as it does not, as some other points of foreign politics do, involve any opposition to particular principles of government, can engage our attention no further, than as it may be necessary to inquire whether the Whigs, who were now in power, were careful to maintain the national honour. The opposition leaders who brought witnesses to the bar of the house of commons, to relate the most horrible tales of cruelty they had suffered from the Spaniards, and who made the nation

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resound with what Mr. Burke calls “the fable of Jenkins’s ears,” loudly exclaimed that the honour of England had been betrayed, and that in the hands of Walpole, Britain had become an object of scorn to her enemies, and her sovereign a mark for the mockery of the humblest of her foes.

The pretence for all this declamation was, that the Spaniards claimed, and constantly exercised a right to search the British merchant-ships which passed near their American ports; and that, in conducting this search their cruisers were guilty of great cruelties to the crews, and often illegally confiscated our ships. The opposition, supported by the public voice, denied the existence of such a right, and called upon the minister to restrain its exercise by force. Walpole, who knew that there were as many stories of British cruelty current in Spain, as there were tales of Spanish atrocities believed in England, who knew also that it was more easy to allege that no right of search existed, than to prove it from treaties or practice, and who, above all other reasons, clung with tenacious grasp to the last hope of peace, withstood the public cry, and refused to plunge headlong into a war.

The causes of this quarrel may be shortly stated thus: Upon the discovery of the new world, Pope Alexander VI. had, in the plenitude of his apostolical power, bestowed it upon Ferdinand the Catholic.

Spain was at this time in the enjoyment of one of those transient gleams of prosperity and power which fall so fitfully upon her history, and vanish as suddenly as they appear. She could at this period have established a title far more ridiculous than that under which she then claimed; and Britain, who trembled for her own existence, had no thought to bestow upon the prospect of distant acquisitions. When the power so terrible in the hand of Philip II., had fallen to ruins under the mismanagement of his feeble successors, the claim was still as haughtily maintained, although the ability to enforce it was gone. It was not until the year 1670, that Spain ever formally acknowledged the right of another nation to any part of the new world. By a treaty concluded in this year between England and Spain, the title of the former nation to all her then present possessions in the West Indies, was expressly recognised; but it is forbidden to either nation to trade with the colonies of the other, unless under a licence from the sovereign to whom such colony belonged. This licence it was not difficult to obtain from the Spanish court; which, during a considerable period, looked upon England as the natural ally of Spain, and the only power able to preserve her low countries from the ambition of France. A flourishing and very profitable, although frequently illicit trade sprung up between the English and

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Spanish colonies, and much British capital was embarked in this commerce.

This continued uninterrupted until the Tories of Queen Anne's reign suffered a prince of the house of Bourbon to hold the Spanish sceptre. The policy of the court of Madrid then became changed. It was no longer necessary to propitiate England; the Low Countries were lost, and France was no longer an enemy. The framers of the treaty of Utrecht had failed to meet this consequence by turning custom and general sufferance into an admitted right; they had provided only that the English South Sea Company should be permitted to supply the Spanish colonies for thirty years with a certain annual number of negroes; that the English should be allowed to send once a year, to Spanish America, a ship of a stated tonnage laden with European articles; and should retain the privilege of putting into Spanish harbours for the purposes of refitting and provisioning. The British merchants were reluctant to abandon a lucrative commerce. The annual ship which the treaty allowed was found by the Spaniards to be inexhaustible, since she was continually supplied by other vessels which followed her for that purpose. The merchantmen which put into Spanish ports to refit were generally laden with British goods when they arrived, but commonly departed in ballast. The

contraband trade was attempted to be carried on as extensively, now that it was the policy of Spain to put it down, as it had been when it was her policy to encourage it. The consequences were unavoidable. The Spanish cruisers made many seizures; and the British, when opportunity offered, retaliated. Barbarities were committed upon both sides, until the merchants at home, alarmed at their frequent losses, invoked the national protection.

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It will be readily seen that this was not a question so straightforward and indisputable, that the honour of the country required the enforcement of immediate concession. Whether occasional abuses of the right of search might not have afforded such an excuse for abolishing that right as policy would dictate should not be allowed to escape, is a question admitting of discussion, and upon which men would form different opinions, as they were the more impressed with the value of the object or its probable cost.

Of the policy of a country, every minister must decide according to his judgment; nor have we a right to asperse his memory because some may hold that that policy might have been more skilfully directed; but the national honour is beyond his province, his duty is not to speculate upon, but to vindicate it. There appears no reason to accuse the Whig government of having, upon this occasion, been guilty of such a dereliction of duty. Instead of de-

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declaring war, Walpole negotiated, and the result was a convention, which was ratified immediately before the meeting of parliament in February, 1739.

The terms of this convention were by no means satisfactory to the nation, now tortured into a state of excitement, which rendered it deaf to reason and credulous to the most evident absurdities. No sooner was the document made public, than a violent outcry arose against its conditions from all parts of the country; and the general indignation, carefully fostered by the opposition leaders, and at last gathering into a focus, burst with terrific violence within the walls of the house of commons.

On the 8th of March, Horace Walpole opened the debate, by an elaborate defence of the convention; and concluded a speech of more than two hours' duration, with a motion for an address to the crown, returning thanks for its communication, and approving its terms.

The tongues of the opposition were now loosed, and the whole garnered store of criminary eloquence was poured forth. The elegance of Lyttelton and the strength of Barnard, the polished irony of Grenville and the blunt eloquence of Shippen, the passion of Sanderson, the lofty dignity of Wyndham, and the stern and terrific declamation of Pitt, were all applied to ridicule, or execrate the conduct of the minister. It was a mighty occasion which demanded all their

energies, and the consciousness of their popularity seemed to multiply their powers. The government put forth its whole force in reply ; but the honour, although not the success of the day remained with the opposition. Walpole dared not to state in the house of commons the true reasons of his conduct. It had been almost as dangerous and quite as useless to declare in that assembly, that the Spaniards had a right to put down our illicit trade with their colonies, as it would have been, about sixty years before, to have declared within the same walls that Titus Oates was a perjurer, and his plot a fable. Another national intoxication had passed over the island. Mr. Jenkins, who always carried in his pocket the ears which, as he asserted, the Spaniards had cut off, and exhibited them wrapped up in cotton,* was almost as considerable a character in the present day as Oates had been in his.

The ministerial speakers were superior in number to those of the opposition. Fox, Pelham, Sir Charles

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* It is a curious fact that no note of the examination of this man appears in the journals, although he was certainly examined at the bar of the house of commons, and produced the ears as stated in the text. Lord Marchmont told Mr. Rose that the subject became the topic of conversation that same evening, at Sir W. Wyndham's. Lord M. was expatiating upon the cruelty of the act, when Shippen interrupted him, declaring, that Jenkins had both his ears on his head, "the truth of which," says Mr. Rose, "was afterwards ascertained. — *Marchmont Papers*, vol. ii., p. 196.

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Wager, Selwyn, Lyddall, and the two Walpoles, were the most prominent of the fourteen speakers who supported the minister. Upon the division, the address was carried by a majority of twenty-eight.

The debate was renewed upon the bringing up of the report, and the opposition seem to have been inspired, by their defeat, with additional virulence. Pulteney had reserved himself for this occasion, and opened the debate with all his usual force of oratory. This second debate was chiefly remarkable from Mr. Fazakerly, a lawyer, and a constant member of opposition, hinting that it was the intention of his party, if this question should be again carried against them, to abandon the house to the minister, and to cease from all further efforts in parliament.

The majority was against them; the report was received by a majority of thirty,* and the threat was immediately fulfilled. Sir W. Wyndham, when the

* In this division, chance gave to the opposition two votes. The noes remained in the house, the minister and his friends went forth into the lobby. After the doors were closed, the opposition tellers found a stray member asleep upon the ministerial benches; he was quickly aroused, and, in spite of his remonstrances, numbered among the minority. Mr. Orlebar to the

Rev. H. Etough.—*Coxe's Walpole-Correspondence*. The question of the convention was also marked by the secession of the Duke of Argyle, who, upon this occasion, abandoned the ministers, and openly declared against them; a circumstance which induced the Duchess of Marlborough to prophesy the approaching dissolution of the ministry. "When a house is to fall," says the duchess,

numbers were declared, rose and said, “Sir, I have seen with the utmost concern this shameful—this fatal measure approved of; and I now rise up to pay my last duty to my country as a member of this house.

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“I was in hopes, sir, that the many unanswerable arguments urged in the debate against the convention, might have prevailed upon gentlemen to have, for once, listened to the dictates of reason; for once, to have distinguished themselves from being a faction against the liberties and properties of their fellow-subjects. I was the more in hopes of this, sir, since, in all the companies I have been in from the time this convention has been spoken of, I have not found one single person without-doors pretend to justify it. Is it not strange, that the eloquence of one man should have so great an effect within these walls, and the unanimous voice of a brave, suffering people without, should have so little? I am surprised, that I should be so blind as not to discover one argument that has the least appearance of reason among all that has been offered to our agreeing to this address. This, sir, must proceed, either from the majority of this house being determined by arguments that we

“the rats go away.” His brother, carried with him to the opposition the Earl of Islay, was equally conspicuous on the other side. Argyle four votes in the house of commons.—*Coxe's Correspondence.*

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have not heard, or from my wanting common sense to comprehend the force of those we have heard. In the first place, sir, I think I cannot, with honour, sit in an assembly which is determined by motives, which I am not at liberty to mention; and if the last is the case, I look upon myself to be a very unfit person to act as a senator. I here, sir, bid a final adieu to this parliament. Perhaps, when another parliament shall succeed, I may be again at liberty to serve my country in the same capacity. I therefore appeal, sir, to a future free, uninfluenced house of commons. Let it be the judge of my conduct and that of my friends upon this occasion. Meantime I shall conclude, with doing that duty to my country which I am still at liberty to perform, which is, to pray for its preservation. May, therefore, that Power which has so often and so visibly interposed in behalf of the rights and liberties of this nation continue its care over us at this worst and most dangerous juncture, whilst the insolence of enemies without, and the influence of corruption within threaten the ruin of her constitution.”*

* There is another report of this speech which is more moderate, but far less eloquent, in the London Magazine; the coincidence of the two reports is very remarkable; they differ rather in language than in ideas. That this is the more faithful, however, appears from a letter from Mr. John Selwyn to the Hon. Thos. Townshend, (*Coxe's Correspondence*, vol. iii., p. 519) in which an account of the debate is

It is probable that this speech was intended to draw down the indignation of the majority and to provoke a committal to the tower. It is said that Pelham had already risen to propose such a measure, when Walpole, who had before disappointed a similar system of tactics, interfered. That sagacious politician knew that it was much easier to answer than safe to punish such an harangue. "The measures," he said, "which the gentleman who spoke last, and his friends may pursue, give me no uneasiness. The friends of the nation and the house are obliged to them for pulling off the mask, by making this public declaration. We can be upon our guard against open rebellion, but it is difficult to guard against secret treason. The faction I speak of, sir, never sat in this house, they never joined in any public measure of the government but with a view to distress it and to serve a popish interest. The gentleman who is now the mouth of this faction was looked upon as the head of those traitors who, twenty-five years ago, conspired the destruction of their country and of the royal family, to put a popish pretender upon the throne. He was seized by the vigilance of the then government, and pardoned by its clemency ;

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given, and several expressions recorded, which are retained in the version given in the text, but omitted in the other.

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but all the use he has ungratefully made of that clemency has been to qualify himself, according to law, that he and his party may, some time or other, have an opportunity to overthrow all law. I am only afraid, sir, that they will not be so good as their word, and that they will return to this house ; for I remember that, in the case of their favourite bishop [Atterbury], who was impeached of high treason, the same gentleman and his faction made the same resolution. They then went off like traitors, as they were, sir, but their retreat had not the detestable effect they expected and wished, and therefore they returned. Ever since, sir, they have persevered in the same treasonable intention of serving that interest, by distressing the government. But I hope their behaviour will unite all the true friends of the present happy establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family more firmly than ever, and that the gentlemen who, with good intentions, have been deluded into the like measures will awaken from their delusion, since the trumpet of rebellion is now in a manner sounded."

It is said that this measure was recommended by Bolingbroke, and that the plan was, that Wyndham should be sent to the tower for the violence of his speech, and that his friends should all allow themselves to be committed for absence from a call of the house, which was fixed for the ensuing Monday.

Had this scheme succeeded, the spectacle of nearly half the house of commons lying in prison would, doubtless, have caused all the wished-for excitement.

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But its success was impossible; the plan betrays an ignorance of the temper of the minister which Bolingbroke could never have displayed. Wyndham was allowed to walk out of the house at the head of his party; and so far from taking advantage of the approaching call of the house, Walpole obtained an adjournment over that day. The nation was not excited; moderate men, even of their own party, blamed the measure; and a respectable section, among whom were Sir John Barnard and Lord Cornbury, refused to join the seceders. A few days' reflection served to convince Wyndham and his friends that they had placed themselves in a very unhappy position; they applied to Bolingbroke for counsel, and the reply of their ancient leader sufficiently indicates that it was not by his advice that the secession was made. "What has happened," he says, "in the course of opposition to Walpole's administration puts me in mind of what happened in the beginning of the late king's reign, when the Tories suffered themselves to be pushed into rebellion, and undertook passionately and rashly an enterprise that of all others requires the coolest counsels and most deliberate measures." He advises them to get back to their seats as quickly as possible, and proposes, as

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 A. D. 1739. from their constituents.*

Meanwhile Walpole in the house of commons was absolute and unopposed : from the 9th of March, the day of the secession, until the prorogation of parliament, on the 16th of June, no debate of the slightest interest occurred in the lower house. In the lords the cry was kept up, but the people have never regarded the proceedings of that house with the interest which they attach to those of their own representatives. Perhaps the most important circumstance connected with these debates was, that Argyle stood forward in them the loudest to arraign the conduct of the government, and yet retained his appointments. The minister suffered himself to be told publicly in the house of commons that “ he dared not take these away.”

A signal proof was, however, given in the house of commons that the Whigs had not yet thoroughly learnt, or had not acquired courage to avow the true principle of toleration. After the secession Walpole was again called upon by the dissenters to repeal the Test act. It would be supposed that he could now find no excuse for delay ; but, to the surprise of a deputation which waited upon him, he returned the

* Bolingbroke to Polwarth.—*Marchmont Papers*, vol. ii., p. 190.

answer they had so often heard before : “ Whatever were his private inclinations the attempt was improper, and the time was not yet arrived.” Dr. Chandler, the principal of the deputation, replied, “ You have so often, Sir Robert, returned this answer, that I trust you will give me leave to ask you when the time will come ?” The minister appears to have been taken off his guard. “ If you require a specific answer, I will give it you in a word—Never.” The question was then brought into the house, and Walpole, having in vain implored the Tories to come and throw it out, was obliged to undertake the whole task himself. He made a speech, without one word to the merits of the question, upon the unfitness of the time, and attempted to be witty upon the Tories, who did not now come down to defend the church. His followers took up the strain, and the speakers affected to wonder that gentlemen who had formerly been so zealous in persecuting the damnable sin of schism should now be missing from the house.* In a Whig house of commons, whence every Tory member had been weeded, this question was lost by a majority of one hundred and eighty-eight against eighty-nine,† a greater majority than had appeared

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* John Selwyn to the Hon. Thomas Townshend, April 7, 1739. † Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. i., p. 608. Coxe.

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when the Tories sat in the house.* This is an instance of disgraceful and indefensible abandonment of principle.

In October of this year Walpole, although persuaded that such a step was unjustifiable and impolitic, declared war against Spain. The cabinet was divided upon this question, Walpole was supported only by Sir Charles Wager, the Earl of Godolphin, now lord privy seal, and the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke of Newcastle was for war,† and Harrington, who looked upon the duke as his patron, was of course upon the same side. The king was also for war, and the Earl of Wilmington, who thought he had now learned to govern, and had begun to wish for the renewal of the offer which he had once refused, was influenced by the king. The Duke of Newcastle prevailed, and Walpole succumbed to the will of his master. A great man would have retired at this conjuncture, but Walpole was only a shrewd man, and he retained his power. The reverses which attended the commencement of this war increased the

* But, although the Tories had voted against the repeal, Pulteney and his friends, now also among the seceders, had voted for it; the absence of the opposition, therefore, had no very decided influence either way.

† "The war is yours," said Walpole to the duke during one of their discussions; "you have had the conduct of it—I wish you joy of it."—*Coxe, from the Hardwicke Papers.*

unpopularity of the government; dissensions arose within, Walpole and Newcastle were in open opposition, and the minister vented his spleen in testy remarks at the council-board, and unequivocally expressed his intention to rid himself of his rival.*

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* Upon one occasion, when the destination of a ship of war was the subject of debate, and Walpole and Newcastle, as usual, differed, the former exclaimed, "I oppose nothing, I give in to every thing, am said to do every thing, am to answer for every thing—and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think right;—but I dare not, I will not, make any alteration." When the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed that the matter should be taken into consideration another day, he opposed it, and said, "Let them go, let them go," alluding, of course, to the Pelhams. The duke did not let this observation pass unmarked, for he related it to Lord Hardwicke, in a letter yet extant among the Hardwicke Papers.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Death of Wyndham and Marchmont—Motion to remove Walpole from the king's presence and councils—Review of the debate—The Tories again forsake the Whig opposition—Fate of the motion, and its consequences.

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THIS year was marked by the deaths of Sir William Wyndham and the Earl of Marchmont. The latter was only important as it removed Lord Polwarth from the house of commons, where his eloquence and activity were much dreaded by the ministers, and placed him in a position where he must be far less useful. With Wyndham, however, died all appearance of unity between the two factions which made up the opposition. Wyndham had bowed his stubborn creed in deference to the genius of Boling-

broke—he had become a conforming Tory. His extensive influence and great eloquence had enabled him to induce the Tories to accommodate their tactics to the necessity of the time; and, as the head of a compact party, he could demand from his Whig allies the forbearance he himself observed. These deaths were a great loss to the opposition; “What a star has our minister!” exclaimed Bolingbroke,* “Wyndham dead, Marchmont disabled! The loss of Wyndham and Marchmont to our country!”

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The king, having returned from his usual visit to Hanover, met his parliament in November of this year, and the opposition came to the contest flushed with the expectation that the ill-success which had attended the war must shake the minister from his seat. The usual opposition to the address was made, and defeated; but the approach of the real struggle was intimated by Sandys, a man whom his contemporaries likened to Pym, and whose readiness of speech, intensity of application, and indomitable perseverance, seemed to warrant the comparison. On the 11th of February, this motion-maker to the opposition, as he has been often called, left his seat, and, crossing the floor to Walpole, said that he thought it an act of common justice to inform him

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* Marchmont Papers, vol. ii., p. 224.

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that he should, on Friday next, bring an accusation of several articles against him. The minister immediately rose, and receiving the intimation with great composure and dignity, thanked him for his notice, and, after requesting a candid and impartial hearing, declared that he would not fail to attend the house, as he was not conscious of any crime to deserve accusation. He concluded by laying his hand to his breast and saying, with some emotion—
“ Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ.”

Pulteney rose and observed, that the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were alike inaccurate, and that Horace, whom he had just misquoted, had written “ nullâ pallescere culpâ.” Walpole defended his quotation, and offered to bet a guinea that he was right. Pulteney accepted the bet, and referred it to Nicholas Hardinge, clerk of the house, a gentleman distinguished for classical erudition. Hardinge decided against Walpole, who immediately taking a guinea out of his pocket, threw it across the house to Pulteney. The latter caught it, and holding it up to the house, exclaimed, “ It is the only money which I have received from the treasury for many years, and it shall be the last !”*

* Such is the version given of Nicholas Hardinge. This guinea this curious anecdote by Mr. Coxe, was carefully preserved, and de- who received it from the son of scended into the hands of Sir John

This was but a light commencement to an attack which Pulteney and his friends intended should end with the impeachment, perhaps with the death of the minister.

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On the 13th of February, the threatened motion was made.* The public expectation had been raised

Murray, who, in 1828, presented it to the British Museum. In the medal-room of that establishment the coin may, of course, still be seen. It is authenticated by a memorandum in the handwriting of Pulteney, too curious to be omitted. "This guinea I desire may be kept as an heirloom. It was won of Sir Robert Walpole, in the house of commons, he asserting the verse in Horace to be *nulli pallescere culpæ*, whereas I laid the wager of a guinea that it was *nullâ pallescere culpâ*. He sent for the book, and being convinced that he had lost, gave me this guinea. I told him I could take the money without any blush on my side, but believed it was the only money he ever gave in the house where the giver and the receiver ought not equally to blush. This guinea, I hope, will prove to my posterity the use of knowing

Latin, and encourage them in their learning."

* There are two full reports of this debate. One, which appeared at intervals in the London Magazine, a few months after it occurred; and another, published eleven months after the former, in the Gentleman's Magazine. The latter is by far the more complete, and corresponds with the journals of the house; but the speeches are from the pen of Johnson. Sir John Hawkins, in his Life of Johnson, states, that the debates written by this author are pure invention, written upon no more ample data than the knowledge of the names of the speakers and the side on which they spoke. Mr. Cobbett, in the prefaces to vols. x. and xi. of his Parliamentary History, notwithstanding the numerous anecdotes confirmatory of Sir John Hawkins's assertion, combats this proposition,

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to the utmost pitch; the passages to the gallery were crowded at a very early hour; and the concourse was prodigious. Several of the commons secured their seats at six in the morning; and no less than four hundred and fifty members were in the house at one o'clock, when the debate was opened.

Sandys, in a speech of considerable length, recapitulated all the charges which had been, from time to time, brought against the minister. After some

and produces some letters, that use are such reports unless for these passed between Cave, the proprietor and editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, and Dr. Birch, to prove purposes? It is so evident to every that the members themselves occasionally contributed their own reader that the sentiment and language are those of Johnson that speeches to his periodical; but I in reading the modulated sentences and sonorous substantives, we forget to notice the name of the speaker, and think only of the author. Every orator is raised or depressed to the same level. All peculiarity of expression—all distinctive marks, disappear at once under the hands of this literary Procrustes.

Gordon, the translator of Tacitus, who reported for the London Magazine, sat nightly in the gallery, and his reports, although no doubt very unfavourable portraits, are, to the extent they go, far more faithful.

general remarks, he divided his accusations into three heads—as they related to foreign policy, domestic policy, and the conduct of the war. Under the first head, the orator discussed the merits of the treaties made during the present administration from that of 1721 down to the recent convention, on which he expatiated with all his power of censure. He concluded that the honour and interests of the country had been sacrificed, and that the foreign policy of the minister was made up of expedients by which he seemed to live from year to year. The domestic policy was still more fruitful in topics of accusation. Upon this head he proceeded to say ; “ The making and unmaking the famous bank contract ; the screening from condign punishment those who, by their wicked and avaricious execution of the trust reposed in them by the South Sea scheme, had ruined many thousands, were the steps by which the minister was supposed to have risen to power. As he began, so he has gone on, oppressing the innocent ; imposing upon the credulous ; screening the guilty ; wasting the public treasure ; and endangering the liberties of the people. A much greater army has all along been kept up than was necessary for the support of our government, or consistent with our constitution : every method proposed for securing our constitution against its most dangerous enemy, corruption, has been rejected ;

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while penal laws have been increased until a great number of his majesty's subjects are reduced under the arbitrary power of a minister and his creatures. Every department of the public expense has been increased by the creation of new and useless offices ; all inquiry has been prevented or defeated ; and almost every session has been disgraced by a compliance with the unconstitutional demand of votes of credit. Meanwhile the civil list has been increased beyond all precedent ; commerce has been neglected and languishing ; and our expenditure is augmented as our revenues decrease. To such unaccountable conduct the present melancholy situation of the affairs of Europe is principally to be ascribed."

"Every material step, it will be said, has been authorized or approved by parliament. This, sir, becomes the most heavy and evident charge against the minister. He has monopolized all the favours of the crown, and engrossed the sole disposal of all places, pensions, titles, and ribbons, as well as all preferments, civil, military, or ecclesiastical. Having effected this, he has made a blind submission to his direction at elections and in parliament, the only ground to hope for preferments, and the only tenure by which any gentleman could preserve what he had. This, sir, requires no proof. Has not the minister himself said, and in this house, too, that he would be

a pitiful fellow of a minister, who did not displace any officer that opposed his measures in parliament? Is it not, then, an aggravation of his misconduct that he obtained the approval of parliament, from his having overawed a majority by means of that crime he has here openly avowed?

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“ Having thus obviated such an objection, I may pursue my catalogue of accusations. His power depends upon the continuation of the heaviest imposts; for these supply him with patronage. Accordingly he has employed all his art to prevent our paying off our old debt. It is now rather more than it was in 1725. Sir John Barnard, a few years since, introduced into this house a scheme for reducing the interests payable upon the national debt, and for putting the whole upon a certain footing of being discharged in a course of years. It is well known by whom, and by whose influence this scheme was defeated. One step of misconduct did not meet the approbation of parliament. I mean the excise scheme; one of the weakest or one of the wickedest projects that was ever set on foot or countenanced by any minister in the kingdom. If its author was sensible of the great power that scheme would have placed in the hands of a minister, and had really formed a design to overturn, by that means, the liberty of the people, he ought to be not only removed, but punished for his wicked-

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ness. If his object was merely the making an uncertain, and at best but a trifling addition to the public or civil list revenue, his weakness is no less evident, in that for such an object he advised his majesty to forfeit the affections of the whole people. Whether this were crime or oversight, for this project alone he deserves, at least, to be removed from his majesty's counsels.

“ In the conduct of the war our minister has acted more weakly or more wickedly than he did in the time of peace. He has made us an object of scorn to our enemies, and an object of pity to our friends, by the vastness of his preparations and the pusillanimity of his actions. Our trade has been neglected for the sake of fitting out mighty squadrons ; those squadrons have gone forth, and, consulting either their orders or their means, have done nothing. Shall we sit in this house and see the counsels of our sovereign directed by a minister who has thus, both in peace and war, exposed our country to scorn and derision ?

“ But the proof of crime, or even of misconduct is unnecessary to this motion. If all the charges against this minister were false, the occasion for his removal would not be less urgent. He is unpopular ; and no man who has been so unfortunate as to incur the public hatred, ought to have any share in his majesty's

confidence or counsels. Were this not the case—were his public conduct pure, and his administration uniformly popular, yet the very length of it is, in a free country, sufficient cause for removing him. Remove him from the king's counsels and presence; remove him from those high offices and power he is possessed of. If he were conscious of being entirely innocent, and had a due regard to the security and glory of his sovereign, he would have chose to have put himself in this condition long before this time: since he has not thought fit to do so, it is our duty to endeavour to do it for him."

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Such was the line of argument adopted by Sandys, whose speech comprehended all the points urged by his party. The motion was seconded by Lord Limerick; but the debate was interrupted by a proposal that Walpole should withdraw. This proposition was shown to be quite unprecedented, since there was no specific and criminal charge against him; and it was decided that the minister should remain during the debate, and conclude it with his reply. The main question was then proceeded in.

Sandys was answered by Stephen Fox, who characterized his speech as a complication of forgotten pamphlets, and a recollection of forgotten debates. He rightly observed, that the reply to such a speech could contain little novelty or interest; he followed

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the speaker through all his charges; gave the replies which had been before given; and concluded with strong animadversion upon the motives of the promoters of the measure, and high eulogy of the accused minister.

Pitt rose next in the debate. He declared, in his emphatic manner, that “during the administration that was the object of censure, at home, debts were increased, taxes multiplied, and the sinking-fund alienated; abroad, the system of Europe was totally subverted; and at this awful moment, when the greatest scene was opening to Europe that had ever before occurred, he, who had lost the confidence of all mankind should not be permitted to continue at the head of the king’s government.”* “The minister,” he continued, “who neglects any just opportunity of promoting the power or increasing the wealth of his country, is to be considered an enemy to his fellow-subjects; but what censure is to be passed upon him who betrays that army to a defeat, by which victory might be obtained; impoverishes the nation whose affairs he is intrusted to transact by those expeditions which might enrich it; who levies armies only

* Pitt’s speech has been most the Parliamentary Memorandums, unaccountably omitted from the cited by Mr. Coxe, from the Walpole Papers—the rest is Johnson’s. report given in the London Magazine. This first sentence is from

to be exposed to pestilence, and compels them to perish in sight of their enemies without molesting them? It cannot, surely, be denied, that such conduct may justly produce a censure more severe than that which is intended by this motion; and that he who has doomed thousands to the grave—who has co-operated with foreign powers against his country—who has protected its enemies and dishonoured its arms, should be deprived not only of his honours, but of his life; that he should be, at least, stripped of those riches which he has amassed during a long series of prosperous wickedness, and not barely be hindered from making new acquisitions and increasing his wealth by multiplying his crimes.”

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Henry Pelham undertook to reply to Pitt; and he was in his turn attacked by Lyttelton. But the house was far more excited by the speech of Lord Cornbury, who followed. This young nobleman, the friend of Wyndham, the pupil of Bolingbroke, whom Pope loved as the realization of all his dreams of patriotism, stood forward and denounced the motion as an attempt to make mere accusation a proof of guilt and suspicion the ground of punishment. “Instead of evidence produced to prove the particular articles of this complicated accusation, we have heard, hitherto, only florid declamations which may amuse, but cannot convince; and violent invectives, which may fire the

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passions for a moment, but which can have no lasting effect upon the judgment. These have been answered by rhetoric equally engaging, and assertions equally consistent; but to which the laws have given this advantage, that we are obliged to admit them till they are confuted, and by consequence to reject those of the accusers until they are proved. I shall, therefore, continue to suppose every man innocent, till he appears from legal evidence to be guilty; and to reject any charge of accumulative guilt upon the same principles of regard to liberty, to virtue, to truth, and to our constitution, by which I have hitherto regulated my conduct; and for the same reasons for which I have condemned the measures of the administration, I shall now oppose the present motion."

This was ominous of disunion in the ranks of the opposition; but the suspicion became certainty, when Shippen, who had succeeded to the power of Wyndham, rose, and declared that he looked upon the motion as only a scheme for turning out one minister and bringing in another; and as his conduct in parliament had always been regulated with a view to the good of his country, without regard to his own private interest, it was quite indifferent to him who were in or who were out. He would give himself no concern in the question. Having made this declaration, he

left the house, and was followed by thirty-four of his friends; twenty-five more remained in the house to vote with the minister.*

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This open desertion destroyed the confidence of the opposition. It was in vain that Barnard put forth all his powers of invective in an attempt to rally their force, and that Pulteney came forward to recapitulate and enforce all the criminatory harangues of his friends.

Before Walpole was called upon to reply, he had received another token of success; Lord Carteret had made a similar motion in the lords, to that which Sandys had brought forward in the commons. The debate in that house was now ended, and its result was, that the motion was rejected by a majority of one hundred and eight to fifty-nine.

Walpole now rose to reply. It would be tedious to follow the minister through an harangue which consumed four hours in delivery: it contained little more of novelty in defence, than those on the other side had in accusation. But there are some passages which, as they give us Walpole's view of the state of the parties which made up the opposition, are too necessary to our purpose to be omitted. "This attack," he said "proceeds from the passions and

* Walpole's Parliamentary Memorandums. Coxe. Correspondence, vol. iii.

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prejudices of the parties combined against me, who may be divided into three classes—the boys, the riper patriots, and the Tories. The Tories I can easily forgive, they have unwillingly come into the measure, and they do me honour in thinking it necessary to remove me as their only obstacle. This is the heinous offence which exceeds all others, I keep from them the possession of that power, those honours, and those emoluments, to which they so ardently and pertinaciously aspire. But can it be fitting in them, who have divided the public opinion of the nation, to share it with those who now appear as their competitors?—with the men of yesterday, the boys in politics who would be absolutely contemptible, did not their audacity render them detestable!—with the mock patriots, whose practices and professions prove their selfishness and malignity; who threatened to pursue me to destruction, and who have never for a moment, lost sight of their object? These men, under the name of the separatists, presume to call themselves exclusively the nation and the people, and under that character assume all power. In their estimation, the king, lords, and commons, are a faction, and they are the government. Upon these principles they threaten the destruction of all authority, they withdraw from parliament because they succeed in nothing, and then attribute their want of success, not to its

true cause, their own want of integrity and importance, but to the effect of places, pensions, and corruption. May it not be asked, are the people on the court side more united than on the other? Are not the Tories, Jacobites, and Patriots, equally determined? What makes this strict union? What cements this heterogeneous mass? Party engagements and personal attachments. However different their views and principles, they all agree in opposition. The Jacobites distress the government they would subvert: the Tories contend for party prevalence and power. The Patriots, from discontent and disappointment, would change the ministry that themselves might exclusively succeed. Patriotism, sir, is a venerable word when duly practised, but of late it has been so much hackneyed about, that it is in danger of falling into disgrace; the very idea of true patriotism is lost, and the term has been prostituted to the worst of purposes. A patriot, sir! Why patriots spring up like mushrooms, I could raise fifty of them within the twenty-four hours, I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot. I have never been afraid of making patriots; but I disdain and despise all their efforts. Their pretended virtue proceeds from personal malice, and from disappointed ambition. There is not a man among them whose particular aim I am not able to ascertain, and from

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what motive he has entered into the lists of opposition."

After thus characterizing his accusers, he entered upon his defence. The debate had commenced at eleven in the morning, he closed it at four on the following morning, when the motion was negatived by the decisive majority of two hundred and ninety to one hundred and six.

When this result became known, all voices were raised against Shippen and his party. It is indeed difficult to assign any plausible reason for his conduct. The Duchess of Marlborough inclined to think, that Shippen had taken money; but she, upon this occasion, echoed the sentiments of the mere mob. Tindal supposes that the Tories wished to show their allies how contemptible they were without their assistance—a less absurd, but equally unsatisfactory hypothesis; while Mr. Coxe professes to solve the problem by relating an anecdote. Shippen had once begged the life of a friend, who was deeply implicated in some Jacobite plot, Walpole readily granted his request, adding, "I do not ask you to support the measures of my administration, but should a question ever be pending affecting me personally, I expect you will then remember this favour." Mr. Coxe supposes, that Shippen upon this occasion cancelled the debt; but he forgets to inform us by what means he prevailed upon his whole party to support him in

frustrating the most decisive effort that had yet been made to unseat the minister. The Duchess of Marlborough asserts, that the opposition Whigs, or as they called themselves, the separatists, had a promise from the Tories that they would join them; nor, indeed, is it probable that they would have engaged in such an undertaking without that assurance. The duchess also says, that had they been faithful to their promise, they would certainly have been as near carrying what they desired, as in the Excise bill. If the prospect of success was so near, I think it the most probable supposition, that the impossibility of forming an united administration from the parties of Pulteney and Shippen again presented itself, that ulterior measures were again discussed, and that a temporary division was again the consequence.

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That Walpole did not consider the secession of Shippen as an isolated act is very evident. He drew from it an inference, that the opposition was too much divided to be dangerous, and he was lulled into a fatal security. The session closed upon the 25th of April, and this parliament then expired.*

* This supposition is in some currence. "The conduct of the slight degree corroborated, by Bo- Tories is silly, infamous, and void lingbroke's comment upon this oc- of any colour of excuse; and yet,

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the truth is, that the behaviour and language of some of those who complain, I dare say very loudly on this occasion, has prepared it and given Shippen, who disliked the coalition from the first, as much as Walpole, a pretence to make his fools break it. The reflection you make concerning our departed friend (Wyndham) renews all the bitterness of sorrow that I felt

when we lost him. He did not expect any more than I have long done to render this generation of Tories of much good use to their country; and though he came to it late, he came at last to have as bad opinions of Shippen as you see the man deserves."—*Bolingbroke to Marchmont. Marchmont Papers*, vol. ii., p. 245.

CHAPTER XVII.

A new parliament—State of the elections—The Westminster election—Meeting of parliament—Strength of the opposition—Contest in the election committees—Motion upon the conduct of the war—Decisive defeat of Walpole on the Chippenham election—Resignation of Walpole.

Now commenced the struggle which was either to renew for seven years Walpole's lease of power, or to determine it for ever. His situation was by no means that which it had been at the time of the last election. An unsuccessful war was raging, the nation was discontented, the king was absent in Hanover, and those whom his presence might have controlled, were disputing among themselves: of those who had at the last election supported the minister, some, like Argyle and Dodington, had openly gone over to the opposition, some, like

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Newcastle and Wilmington, faintly supported a cause they had ceased to love. No sooner had the elections commenced, than the spirit of the electors became apparent. Westminster had hitherto been a government borough, and the nominees of the minister had been returned as a matter of course. Sir Charles Wager, first lord of the admiralty, and Lord Sandon, a lord of the treasury, were proposed to be re-elected, but some of the electors were resolved to recover their representation, and Admiral Vernon and Mr. Edwin were put in nomination. The contest, although severe, seemed likely to terminate in favour of the ministerial candidates, since, on the fifth day of polling they had a considerable majority; but, on that day the high bailiff, through cowardice or folly, put an end to the poll—seeing a mob advancing to the hustings, bearing banners, inscribed with the watchwords of the opposition, he became alarmed, either for his own safety, or for the success of the government candidates. He mounted upon a form within the hustings, called out that he apprehended a riot was intended, and ordering his clerks to shut their poll-books, ran into the vestry with them. The crowd, enraged at this interference, attacked Lord Sandon, who narrowly escaped with his life. The guards were called out, and, say the opposition scribes, “on a sudden, a body of foot-

guards, to the number of sixty or seventy, marched to Covent-garden churchyard, with their drums beating and their bayonets fixed upon the muzzles of their muskets; they then drew up, and their sergeants declared that they came to murder every man there if they got orders."* It was under the protection of this body of soldiery that the poll was closed, and the ministerial candidates declared duly elected. This outrage was immediately revenged; the affair was bruited throughout the country, and its consequences were seen in every subsequent election.† The minister heard only of defeats or hardly gained victories, and when the returns were so far completed that he could estimate the strength of the parties, he found, to his dismay, that a majority of sixteen was the utmost upon which he could rely. The opposition were not ignorant of their advantage; Dodington, the Duke of Argyle, and the Earls of Stair and Chesterfield, formed among themselves a well-arranged scheme of operations for the ensuing session.

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* Review of the Westminster Election, p. 43. This account of affairs is of course grossly exaggerated for party purposes.

† The exertions of the opposition were seasonably sustained by large contributions from Pulteney, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Prince of Wales, who contracted great debts upon this occasion. Lord Falmouth, in Cornwall, and the Duke of Argyle, in Scotland, were particularly successful in their electioneering campaigns.

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These men now formed the opposition council, for Pulteney refused to join their consultation. He said he was willing to act, but he would not lead, “he was weary of being at the head of a party, and would rather row in the galleys.” Dodington drew up a list of the members, and came to the conclusion that it was the most equally balanced parliament ever returned in England; meetings were held, preliminaries were arranged, and the meeting of the houses was then patiently awaited.*

The new parliament was convened on the 4th of December. To oppose the re-election of Onslow as speaker would have been dangerous;† this ordinary occasion for a trial of strength was therefore neglected. But in the debate upon the address the minister appeared no longer confident of a majority and exulting in his strength; he was reduced to apologize and defend, and he at last weakly agreed to the chief amendment of the opposition. This wavering was more fatal than defeat. The waiters upon providence saw that his fall was approaching,

* See the Correspondence, printed from the Walpole, Hardwicke, and Melcombe Papers, by Mr. Coxe. be but weak, he having by a certain decency of behaviour made himself many personal friends in the minority.—*Chesterfield to Dodington.*

† As for opposition to their speaker. If it be Onslow we shall

and shrunk from his side ; his opponents openly exulted, and Pulteney received the concession as an evidence of his fear of the contest ; he added, that with regard to the balance of power, not being in secrets, he did not know how it was abroad, but he could congratulate the house that he had not, for many years, known it to be so near an equilibrium as it was there. Walpole feebly replied, offering to appoint a day for inquiring into the state of the nation, an offer which was at once accepted. Pulteney, satisfied with his present success, allowed the address, as amended, to pass, observing, that dividing was not the way to multiply.*

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The decisive battle was to be fought in the election committees. Both parties came prepared to wave all scruples upon this occasion. The minister had declared that no quarter should be given in elections, and Dodington had laid it down in his plan of proceedings, that it should be esteemed infamous to desert an election committee. Such was then the code of party honour. The first division was upon the Bossiny election ; the minister succeeded by a majority of six. Satisfied that he still retained a majority, he proceeded to increase it by proposing a creature of his own as chairman of the committee of

* Orlebar to Etough.—*Core's Correspondence*.

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elections. His candidate, Giles Earle, had filled the same situation in the two last parliaments, and had made himself highly unpopular. The opposition had been prepared for this conjuncture, and proposed Dr. Lee, who was beloved and respected by all parties. Upon the division Walpole was left in a minority of four. The discussion of the Westminster election had been looked forward to with great expectations ; Walpole was here confident of success, but he was again disappointed. The election was declared void, by a majority of four ; the high bailiff was ordered into custody by a majority of two ; and a resolution, protesting against the presence of soldiery at elections, passed without a division. An adjournment now took place until the 18th of January. No one doubted that it was for the purpose of allowing time for the arrangement of a new ministry. But Walpole had held power too long to quit it readily ; he employed the interval in futile negotiations and vain attempts to divide his enemies, and he brought his sovereign to share in his humiliation, by persuading him to offer the Prince of Wales terms of reconciliation, which were rejected with contempt. To the surprise of the nation, upon the reassembling of the house, he again appeared as minister, resolved to cling to his office to the last.

On the 21st the government members were startled

upon entering the house of commons to find the opposition benches crowded with the whole strength of the party. It was evident that no effort had been spared to bring up every vote at their command; cripples had been brought in upon their crutches, and sick men, enveloped in bandages and nightcaps, proclaimed the importance of an occasion which had drawn them from their beds. Meanwhile so well had the secret been kept that the government benches were empty, and no business of importance had been expected. The appearance of the house was explained, when Pulteney rose and in a speech of great power arraigned the conduct of the minister in the prosecution of the war. He concluded with a motion, to refer those papers relating to the subject which had been produced to a secret committee. Upon this demonstration messengers were, of course, despatched in all directions. As the debate was industriously drawn out, the ministerial retainers gradually arrived, and, although so completely outmanœuvred in the first instance, Walpole compensated by his diligence for his want of preparation.

In the less material contest of argument the falling minister was thought by his friends to evince more than his ordinary power. Sir Robert Wilmot, writing an account of the debate to the Duke of Devonshire, says, "Sir Robert exceeded himself, he

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particularly entered into foreign affairs, and convinced even his enemies that he was thoroughly master of them. Mr. Pelham, with the greatest decency, cut Pulteney into a thousand pieces; Sir Robert ably dissected him, and laid his heart open to the view of the house. Mr. Winnington, Sir W. Yonge, and H. Fox, spoke incomparably well. I must not forget Mr. Coke, who, I am told, spoke in a most agreeable manner, and with great spirit.”*

When each party had ready every vote they could hope to muster the debate was concluded, and the most extraordinary artifices were adopted to influence the division. The Prince of Wales, who was present, astonished at the number of invalids who were being carried into the house, exclaimed to General Churchill, who sat near him, “They have got together the lame, the halt, and the blind.”—“Yes, the lame on our side, the blind on yours,” was the reply. Two of these invalids and a gentleman who had recently lost a relation, and could not appear with decency for want of a suit of mourning, had been impressed by Lord Walpole, and kept in a room opening into the house, which he held as auditor of the exchequer; some opposition members getting information of this

* Sir Robert Wilmot to the Duke of Devonshire. — *Coxe's Correspondence*.

stuffed the keyhole of the door with sand. At the critical moment the key was found useless, and three votes were thus lost. Upon the division the defection of two Tory members turned the scale, giving Walpole the majority of two, which would otherwise have been against him.

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The friends of the minister now flattered themselves that the danger was passed. On the contrary, every hour increased it. The opposition, enraged at their unexpected defeat, but animated by the closeness of the division, redoubled their efforts. Dodington wrote to the Earl of Wilmington,* pressing him to declare openly against Walpole in the cabinet, and ambiguously promising that he should be his successor. The advice was unnecessary, for both Wilmington and Dorset had already done so, but with little success, and with objects which Dodington had not been permitted to know. The retainers of the minister appear to have been worse disciplined, or more conscientious, than those of the opposition. We find Walpole and his friends complaining that many of his usual supporters refuse to vote upon elections, while not a man of their opponents was ever absent; close divisions, sometimes won or lost by one vote, were the consequence, until at length a sudden panic seized the government members, and

* Dodington to Wilmington, Jan. 25, 1742.

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Walpole was left in the decisive majority of sixteen.

This was upon the Chippenham election.

On the 3d of February the king adjourned the parliament, to allow time for the formation of a new ministry. On the 9th Sir Robert Walpole was created Earl of Orford, and on the 11th he resigned.*

* Parl. Hist., vol. xii. Coxe's Life of Walpole, and Correspondence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Situation, power, and conduct of Pulteney—Intrigues of Walpole—
 Negotiations for the formation of a new ministry—Their event—
 The new administration—Indignation of the opposition—Meeting
 at the Fountain—Meeting of parliament—Place bill—Inquiry into
 the conduct of Walpole—Its termination.

THE chase was now ended, the game was fairly
 hunted down, and the pack which had been hallooed
 on by Pulteney expected their spoil at the hands
 of their master. Seldom has one man held the po-
 litical power which Pulteney now possessed. The
 king awaited his decision without power of resist-
 ance; the ministers held their places at his pleasure;
 and Walpole, fallen from his high station, felt that
 his life was at the mercy of his triumphant rival.
 The man who had so long been followed by the
 shouts of the populace now had it in his power to
 effect the measures he had before proposed, and to
 punish the conduct he had so often condemned.
 Whichever way he turned he was certain to be fol-

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lowed by that class of members who had lost a master by the fall of Walpole, and were eager to secure another. Surrounded by Pitt, Marchmont, Lyttelton, and others, men whose minds were not *yet* hackneyed to the petty artifices of political intrigue, he might have formed a ministry which, although it would have met with powerful opposition, would have been formidable from its talent, and strong from its popularity. At the head of such men he might have tried to put down the corruption which he had been so long denouncing; he might have exhibited to the nation the unwonted spectacle of a government trusting for success to no unseen influence—to no secret arrangements, but advancing, trusting in its integrity alone for support, and in its efficiency alone for success. One week of power like this had been well worth the prolonged dominion of his predecessor—to fall in such an attempt had been far more glorious than any honours which the crown or even the people could bestow.

But Pulteney did not think so. No sooner did he find himself in the position to which he had aspired, than he clearly showed that the quarrel in which he had engaged was not between Walpole and his country, but between Walpole and Mr. Pulteney. In the words of Bolingbroke, “he had looked upon opposition only as his scaffolding, and he now dis-

covered the greatest readiness to demolish it.”* He eagerly made terms for himself and a few of his particular friends, bartered his popularity and consistency for a peerage, and assented to an arrangement which offered little prospect of any change of measures. The conduct of the negotiations which terminated to this effect may be thus stated. Walpole, when he became reluctantly convinced that he could no longer retain his power, turned his attention to the preservation of his safety. This could only be effected by dividing his enemies, for many important members of the opposition insisted upon his impeachment as a necessary condition to their support of any succeeding government. With this object it appears that he made some fallacious overtures to Argyle and Dodington, and the Tory party to which they were just now considered as allied. Nor were these advances without their effect, since the pretensions of that party were evidently increased; and the Duchess of Marlborough says it was thought they would be contented with nothing less than a Tory prime minister.† But Walpole’s real design was

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* Marchmont Papers.

† It was not difficult to arouse the mutual hostility of the parties. Dodington, writing to the Duke of Argyle, says, “Your grace and I have often agreed that in the course of our acquaintance we never met with a set of gentlemen of more extensive honour and benevolence, truer lovers of their country, or more zealous to serve it, than the principal of the Tories. Several

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upon Pulteney. In this affair he had to overcome the king's strong personal animosity; an obstacle which required no little labour to remove. The minister appears to have thoroughly understood the character of his opponent; it was the obstinacy of the king he feared, not the constancy of the statesman. As George's opposition relaxed Walpole exclaimed in triumph to his brother—"I have set the king on him!" and when he received permission to make the offer he considered the affair as accomplished. With a gesture, as if he were locking a door, he said, "I have turned the key of the cabinet upon him."* The proposal was now to be laid before Pulteney, through the Duke of Newcastle. Pulteney refused to give this nobleman a private meeting, who therefore waited upon him openly, accompanied by Lord Hardwicke, and held a conference at which Lord Carteret was present as the friend of Pulteney. The duke began by saying, that they came deputed by his majesty; that the king was sensible that Sir Robert Walpole could no longer carry on the business of the house, and, therefore,

of them have the same good qualities, but if the name of Whig comes across them it locks up all their faculties, and they cannot exert them. They stand like knight-errants of old under sudden enchantment, with their arms extended and their mouths open in the very attitude to act and speak for the man, when the charm comprehended in that syllable seizes them, and they can do neither for a Whig.—*Melcombe Papers.*

* Coxe.

was willing to place the government in Mr. Pulteney's hands; that this offer was, however, made upon the condition that Walpole should not be prosecuted, since the king could not consistently with honour abandon his servant. Pulteney here interrupted the duke, saying, that this was a condition he could not comply with; and even if such might be his inclination, it might not be in his power, for the heads of parties were often, like the heads of snakes, urged onwards by the tail. He neither could nor would accept of such a condition.

The meeting thus ended without effect, but before they parted some wine was brought in: the Duke of Newcastle took a glass, and drank "To a happier meeting." Pulteney replied from Shakspeare—

"If we do meet again why we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made."

A similar meeting took place a few days after, and the duke then made an unconditional surrender, appealing only to Pulteney's generosity in favour of Walpole, and hoping that he would not require too many alterations, but would be content with the removal of Sir Robert Walpole and a few others. Pulteney replied that he was by no means a man of blood; he would be guided in this respect by the opinion and advice of his friends; but he hinted that the ex-minister must, at least, expect some parliamentary

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censure of his conduct. He then propounded his list of appointments. Between the first and second meeting it appears that some private messages had passed between Pulteney and the king; and George had entreated that, if he would not take the treasury himself, he would allow his personal friend, the Earl of Wilmington, to *slide* into it. The appointments now announced were, doubtless, in accordance with these private arrangements.* Pulteney declared that as the disposition of places was put into his hands he would accept none for himself; he had often declared against accepting any place and would be constant to himself. He therefore only claimed a peerage and a seat in the cabinet. He then named the Earl of Wilmington first commissioner of the treasury; Sandys, chancellor of the exchequer; Carteret, who coveted Wilmington's post and was with difficulty pacified, secretary of state, instead of Harrington, who was to be removed.† A new board of admiralty was named, including Sir J. Hyde Cotton;

* An accident which happened at this juncture was probably not without some effect. As Pulteney was riding in Hyde Park he had a fall from his horse, which gave him a slight bruise; the king happened to come up at the instant, and being informed of Mr. Pulteney's misfortune, he immediately went to him, took him into his coach, and showed such concern for him as could not but gratify his vanity and excite his gratitude.—*Chesterfield's Characters Reviewed.*

† He was created an earl, and made president of the council, vacant by the promotion of Wilmington.

some lords of the treasury, chosen from the opposition, completed the proposed list of alterations.

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No sooner was it known that this arrangement had taken place, than Pulteney was assailed with all the virulent indignation of a party who conceived themselves betrayed, Carteret, whom alone Pulteney had admitted to his confidence, was not a favourite with Argyle and his followers; the terms were by no means such as they could approve; the distribution of offices was not at all to their satisfaction, and had these things been different they would have refused to be bound by Pulteney, from the same principle of pride which had induced Pulteney, some years before, to refuse to ratify an agreement made by Walpole. Complaint was immediately borne to the Prince of Wales; and Pulteney, accompanied by Scarborough, met his accusers, Argyle, Chesterfield, Cobham, Gower, and Bathurst, in the presence of the prince. After hearing the accusation and reply, the prince sided with Pulteney, and supported the new arrangements. He soon after granted an audience to Walpole, and assured him of his protection; and a reconciliation immediately took place between the prince and his father.

Foiled in this attempt, the dissatisfied party convened a meeting of the late opposition at the Fountain Tavern, in the Strand. About three hundred of the members of both houses attended,

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and Pulteney was present to confront his accusers. * Argyle was the chief complainant, he was very severe in his reflections, remarking upon Pulteney's conduct, that a grain of honesty is worth a cart-load of gold. Pulteney replied, defending himself upon the ground of expediency, and showing how unreasonable it was that such accusations should be made by a man who had held places and pensions for years, against one who had been continually labouring in the work which had just been completed.†

* Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, so formidable as a penner of political pasquinades, now turned his satire upon Pulteney. In one of the best of his odes, called "The Statesman," he alludes to this meeting at the Fountain. He is invoking his muse to sing of Pulteney:—

"Leave a blank here and there in each page,
To enroll the fair deeds of his youth;
When you mention the acts of his age,
Leave a blank for his honour and truth.

"Say, he made a great monarch change hands,
He spake, and the minister fell;
Say he made a great statesman of Sandys,
(O that he had learnt him to spell).

"Then enlarge on his cunning and wit,
Say how he harangued at the Fountain,
Say how the old patriot's were bit,
And a mouse was produced by a mountain."

† The account of these arrangements has been chiefly taken from Bishop Newton's Autobiography. of Bath, and appears to have written this account from the earl's dictation. The bishop afterwards read it over to Sandys, who said

This debate was, as Percival remarks, in his pamphlet called "Faction Detected," the death of the opposition. The avowed Tories were thoroughly disgusted; they had, in fact, sufficient reason, since Pulteney had abandoned them without ceremony. Pitt and his friends, who expected that every abuse was to fall with Sir Robert Walpole, and a political millennium to succeed, were no less disappointed; and Argyle, with his roving band of party borderers, although he resumed his places for a short time, soon threw them up, and recommenced his hostility. "As it was too soon," says Percival, "for these discontented people to style themselves a new opposition, because the parliament had not yet met, and they knew not what measures would be pursued; they formed themselves, for the present, under the title of the Broad-bottom, a cant word, which, corresponding equally with the personal figure of some of the leaders and the nature of their pretensions, was understood to imply a party united to force the Tories into the administration."*

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On the 18th of February both houses met, pursuant to adjournment, and writs were issued for the vacancies occasioned by the recent appointments.

that it contained some facts which very unbiassed authorities for history, but the narrative is circumstantial and uncontradicted. perfectly true. These are not * Faction Detected.

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Meanwhile the court having obtained their object no longer kept faith with Pulteney ; the new board of admiralty was declared, and Sir John Hynde Cotton, whose name had been inserted by Pulteney, for the sake of preserving some little decency towards his Tory allies, was omitted. Pulteney complained in vain ; he was coolly told by Newcastle, that the king had now another shop to go to ;—and he was right. Pulteney had now no other alternative than to put himself at the head of the Tory party and revenge the insult, or to retire from public life. The former his party honour, which he had always preserved, forbade him to do, the latter he had long looked forward to. “ When I have turned out Sir Robert Walpole I will retire into that hospital of invalids the house of peers,” was his frequent expression. The sickness and death of his daughter averted, for a short time, his attention from these things ; but he had formed his determination.

The elections were unfavourable to the new ministry ; few of those who had taken office were re-elected, and some were so certain of defeat that they applied for reversions instead of immediate employments. Lord Limerick’s fear of facing his constituents allowed Sir William Yonge, the friend of Walpole, to retain his office of secretary at war.

The Tories in the commons were furious in their disappointment. Phillips, a speaker, who now

assumed a prominent part in their debates, proposed to postpone the supplies ; and Sir Watkin Williams Wynn supported his motion at great length ; but the Tories were weak, the discontented members had not yet fixed upon a point of union, and they could not venture to go to a division.

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The new ministry, anxious to preserve some shadow of consistency, or dreading to increase their present unpopularity, suffered a Place bill to pass the commons ; a concession perhaps more readily granted since the measure was sure of rejection by the lords. This piece of policy brought them little advantage ; the public voice still declared that they had guaranteed the safety of Walpole as the price of their admission to the cabinet, and the opposition was now determined to test the truth of the accusation. Lord Limerick brought forward a motion for a secret committee to inquire into the conduct of the late minister during the last twenty years. The debate was, of course, a repetition of the topics which had been worn out by ten years of constant use, but the event was decided by the absence of Pulteney, who was at his daughter's bedside, and of Sandys, who was at Worcester, procuring his re-election. Winchelsea and Carteret intimated to Pulteney's friends that it would be agreeable to him if they voted against the motion. They did so, and it was lost by a majority

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of two. The account of the division was received with considerable surprise, since a different result had been anticipated with so much confidence that ulterior proceedings had been arranged. It was upon this occasion that Argyle retired, and the outcry was as great against Pulteney as it had been against Walpole when he stood forward to screen Sunderland from prosecution, on account of his share in the South Sea scheme. Pulteney, unaccustomed to find himself the object of popular indignation, and enraged at the imputations cast upon him, insisted that the motion should be renewed. Lord Limerick again brought it forward, in another form, Pulteney and Sandys were present, and it was carried by a majority of seven.

The committee thus appointed met, with the same zeal to procure evidence against the fallen minister as had animated Walpole himself, twenty-eight years before, in his scrutiny of the documents by which he hoped to criminate Bolingbroke and Oxford. But the failure in the present instance was far more decisive. The charge against Walpole was not that of leaguings with a foreign enemy against the liberties of his country and the throne of his sovereign; the cause of his accusation was a mere suspicion that he had misappropriated a portion of the secret service money with which parliament had intrusted

him. The Whigs had sought against the Tories proofs of treasons known to have been committed, they found only proofs of corruption; the Tories could not affect to *accuse* the Whigs of more than had been *proved* against themselves, and they failed even in this. The witnesses called before the committee refused to be examined as to their transactions with the treasury for ten years, unless they were indemnified against the consequences of the evidence they might give. The commons readily met the objection, and passed a bill of indemnity. In the lords, however, the influence of Orford was still powerful; that of the king yet more potent: the bill was thrown out. This result was, doubtless, produced by party feeling and crown influence, but the conduct of the lords was by no means indefensible. Where specific charges are brought against an individual such indemnities are not uncommon, nor capable of very great abuse; but where there are no such charges—where the object is merely to substantiate vague suspicions, by vague inquiries, extending over a number of years, such an offer is a direct invitation to every speculator to come forward and purge his crimes, by making the minister a partner in his guilt. Against such accusations no defence could avail; the accuser can choose his own time and place, he can produce genuine proofs of fraud, he has only to forge the link which must

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connect the minister with his turpitude. With common ingenuity he may defy detection.*

Deprived of this great necessary for obtaining evidence, the committee laboured in vain. The result of all their inquiries was charges so few, so trivial, and so ridiculous, when compared with those put forward at the commencement of the investigation, that the promoters of the prosecution became themselves ashamed of their work. Success was found impracticable, and Orford enjoyed his honours unmolested.

The presentation of this report, which did not even receive the usual compliment of being printed, closed a session devoid of any other event of the slightest importance. Pulteney, ennobled by the creations of Baron of Heyden, Viscount Wrington, and Earl of Bath, took his seat in the house of peers on the last day of the session.

* Lord Hervey, in the debate at such an election?"—"Yes, for on the bill, urged this argument, I saw the man take it, and I murdered him."—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. xii., "Did Lord Orford give five guineas p. 646.

CHAPTER XIX.

Increase of the influence of Carteret—Carteret becomes minister—
 Attacked by the Pitt section of the Whig party—Debate upon
 taking the Hanoverian troops into British pay—Comparison between
 the eloquence of Pitt and Murray—Death of Wilmington—Contest
 between Pelham and the Earl of Bath for the vacant office—For-
 mation of the Pelham administration—Intrigues in the cabinet—
 The influence of Carteret still continues.

CARTERET quickly engrossed all the favour of the
 sovereign and all the power of the cabinet. The
 same qualifications which had formerly endeared him
 to George I., now rendered him the favourite com-
 panion of his son; but the same arrogant ambition
 which had drawn upon him the hostility of Walpole,
 rendered him the dangerous rival of Newcastle.

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Carteret was energetic and enthusiastic in whatever he undertook, and having espoused the foreign policy of George II., as he had done that of his father, he carried this German policy further than any minister had yet dared to do. Newcastle feebly opposed him, but his power was now gone. Carteret was upon all occasions treated as the minister, and he was the mark of popular indignation. Those who had so long exclaimed against Walpole looked back to his administration as perfection when compared with that of Carteret; his allies, in the opposition, had never implicitly trusted him; they now attacked him with the most virulent hostility.

The most prominent debate in the ensuing session was that upon taking the Hanoverian troops into British pay. This subject called forth all the indignation of the opposition. Sir William Yonge moved the grant, and he was supported by Fox, Lord Percival, Horace Walpole, and, above all, by Murray, who is better known to posterity as the Earl of Mansfield. It was carried by a large majority; but not until Pitt and Grenville, and other members of the opposition, had vehemently protested against a policy which “rendered this great, this mighty nation, a province to a despicable electorate.”*

* Pitt's Speech.—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. xii., p. 1035.

This debate is interesting, since it is the occasion upon which we receive, from an eyewitness, a comparison between the eloquence of Pitt and Murray. "Pitt," says Mr. Oswald, "turned every argument Murray had employed against himself. The one spoke like a pleader, and could not divest himself of a certain appearance of having been employed by others. The other spoke like a gentleman—like a statesman who felt what he said, and possessed the strongest desire of conveying that feeling to others for their own interest and that of their country. Murray gains your attention by the perspicuity of his arguments and the elegance of his diction; Pitt commands your attention and respect by the nobleness and greatness of his sentiments, the strength and energy of his expressions, and the certainty you are in of his always rising to a greater elevation both of thought and style. For this talent he possesses beyond any speaker I ever heard, of never falling, from the beginning to the end of his speech, either in thought or in expression. And as in this session he has begun to speak like a man of business as well as an orator, he will, in all probability be, or rather at present is, allowed to make as great an appearance as ever man did in that house. Murray has not spoken since on the other two debates, where his rival carried all before him, being very

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unequally matched with Pelham, Young, and Wilmington.”*

This administration expired with its nominal but powerless chief. Wilmington's state of health had long been precarious, and his death had been looked forward to, by both parties in the cabinet, as the signal for a struggle for the ascendancy. Carteret, secure in his influence with the king, had fixed upon the Earl of Bath as his successor; and the retired statesman discovered no unwillingness to undertake the office. But Orford, who seemed fated to destroy all Carteret's schemes of ambition, had foreseen, and determined to traverse this. He proposed, as the rival to the Earl of Bath, Henry Pelham, his old and faithful coadjutor in the house of commons, and he trusted to the regard which George still entertained for him for success. Wilmington died in July, when the king, attended by Carteret, was abroad with the army. As had been previously concerted, the Earl of Bath immediately made application,

* Mr. Oswald to Mr. Home— the names of the speakers are, except in a few instances, at variance. This discrepancy affords additional proof how little valuable are Johnson's debates for historical purposes.

“Memoirs of the Right Hon. Jas. Oswald.” This account of the debate is so entirely at variance with that given in the Parliamentary History, that we have difficulty in conceiving it to be the same. Even

through Carteret, for the office. Pelham despatched a similar application to the king in person, and his claims were supported by his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. These communications reached the king reposing at Hanau after the battle of Dettingen. A formal acknowledgment of the despatch was the only answer returned, and the parties in England remained in the greatest suspense. Whether the king was inflexible in his preference of Pelham, or whether Carteret, terrified at the contentions and divisions which followed the battle, shrunk from the unpopularity he had acquired, it is now vain to speculate; but on the 23d of August, when the hopes of his friends were nearly abandoned, Pelham received a despatch conferring upon him the vacant post.

This official announcement was accompanied by a particular communication from Carteret to his colleagues. He avowed that he had exerted himself in favour of Pulteney, and admitted that he had been defeated; but he promised fidelity for the future, and called upon the new minister to renounce all jealousy of his intentions as the sure and only means to secure his support. This profession of friendship was estimated by Pelham at its proper value. His private letters and those of his friends are replete with ironical allusions to their good friend over the water; but Carteret was answered in a strain of cordiality which

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equalled his own—another instance of a contest in duplicity, in which both parties were insincere, and neither were deceived.

Orford tendered to the new minister advice for his future guidance. “You must,” he said, “form your government from your old friends, the old corps, and recruits from the Cobham squadron. Pitt is thought able and formidable, try him or show him. Fox, you can’t do without. Winnington must be had in the way that he can or will be had. Your solicitor is your own and surely will be useful. Hold up the attorney-general, he is very able and very honest.* There are other members of the law noways contemptible, in party considerable, that may be had. It is your business now to forgive and gain. Broad-bottom cannot be made for any thing that has a zest for Hanover. Whig it with all opponents that will parley; but ’ware Tory! I never mean to a person or so; but what they can bring with them will prove a broken reed.”†

Pelham was not deficient in allies; for each section of the opposition offered to coalesce with him, and all approved of his promotion; but upon examining their conditions he found them so incongruous, that it was impossible to accept one without disgust-

* The solicitor was Murray; the attorney-general, Sir Dudley Ryder.

† Coxe’s Memoirs of the Pelham Administration.

ing the rest. He could not conciliate the Cobham squadron as Orford called that section, without declaring openly against Carteret and Bath, and the Hanoverian system of politics. This would probably have proved fatal; but had he succeeded, the allies he would have joined were far from consentient, since Lord Cobham disliked the war altogether, while Pitt and Lyttelton, although they reprobated the objects to which it was perverted, recommended that it should be vigorously prosecuted by the employment of British troops in Flanders. Chesterfield at present belonged to the Pitt section. Dodington, like his patron, Argyle, was ambitious, brilliant, and unstable.

While the king was yet abroad, and the cabinet still unsettled, the Duke of Argyle died. He is an instance of a man inheriting great political power, and gifted with shining abilities, yet failing to obtain respect in life or reputation after death. An able contemporary, speaking of his career, says, "To style him inconsistent, is by much too gentle an appellation; for though from the time he first had a regiment, being under twenty years of age, through the whole course of his great employments he was never known to sell a place or even to make those advantages which were universally esteemed allowable and blameless, yet he was in his own person a most shameless prostitute to power, and extremely avaricious. He would, indeed, sell nothing but himself, which he

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continually did with every circumstance of levity, weakness, and even treachery.”* The duke’s recent object had been to obtain the undivided control of the army—a desire in which he could never succeed. “There are two men,” said Lord Orford, “who want the sole management of the army—the king, and Argyle; but, by ——! neither of them shall have it.” The king entertained a personal dislike to Argyle, and the duke reciprocated the sentiment: he had been latterly engaged in restless attempts at opposition, and it is said, had even opened a correspondence with the pretender.†

George returned to England on the 15th of November, and the cabinet became immediately a scene of conflict. Carteret, who had been omnipotent with the king abroad, and had never deigned to ask the advice of his colleagues, or inform them of his acts, now found it necessary to defend his conduct. At the first cabinet council, when he submitted the supplementary convention with Austria for approval, debates rose so high, that the lord chancellor refused to put the seal to the convention; and Lord Carteret declared that the king would do so himself. After several meetings, the council came to a formal

* Glover’s (the author of “Leonidas”) Posthumous Memoirs.

Pelham in the Memoirs of the Pelham Administration, vol. i., p.

† See a letter from Orford to 105.

division; but Carteret was supported only by three votes, while the lord chancellor was supported by eight.*

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The victory was not, however, yet secure. While Carteret, backed by the Tories, offered a continuance of Hanoverian policy, Pelham, heading a party which was always endeavouring to thwart the royal predilections in favour of the electorate, could not feel secure in his seat. Orford, however, again came to his aid. The king's deference to his old minister appears to have become habitual. Orford counteracted the prejudices against the Whigs which Carteret had endeavoured to infuse into the mind of the king, and obtained that Pelham should be made chancellor of the exchequer, with power to make what changes he pleased in that department.

Pelham used his power with moderation. He removed the Earl of Bath's clients, Sandys and Rushout, but he conferred upon the former a peerage, with the office of cofferer of the household, and upon the latter the treasurership of the navy. In the

* Introduction to Mr. Yorke's Parliamentary Journal. According to this authority, the cabinet divided as follow: With the chancellor—the lord president, the Duke of Newcastle, Dorset, Richmond, Montague, Argyle (rather doubtful), and Grafton, and Mr. Pelham. With Lord Carteret—the Duke of Bolton, and Lords Winchelsea and Tweeddale. The Earl of Islay had succeeded his brother in the dukedom of Argyle.

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posts thus vacated he placed Mr. Fox and Lord Middlesex, a friend of the Prince of Wales. Mr. Winnington, one of the veteran adherents of Walpole, became paymaster of the forces, a post vacated by Pelham's own promotion.

Carteret, however, still remained, and with him remained the odium and unpopularity of anti-national politics. The king had become so generally disliked upon this account that "No Hanoverian king" was now a popular toast; and the army had become so disaffected that, upon the Earl of Stair resigning his command in disgust, he had been followed by the Duke of Marlborough and a great number of inferior officers, and now by Lord Cobham, who sent in his resignation to the Duke of Newcastle, with a protest against engaging this country in making conquests upon the continent.

CHAPTER XX.

Meeting of parliament—Opposition to the Pelham administration—
 Attacks upon Carteret—Disunion among the opposition—Expecta-
 tions of Invasion—Conduct of the parties—Intrigues in the cabinet
 —Expulsion of Carteret—Formation of the Broad-bottom ad-
 ministration.

SUCH was the situation of the cabinet at the opening of the parliament on the 1st of December. In the lords, Chesterfield and Carteret were the only speakers upon the address; but in the commons the opposition took the unusual course of moving a negative to it. The attack was upon Carteret, not upon the Pelhams. Pitt exclaimed against him as “an execrable, a sole minister, who had renounced the British nation, and seemed to have drunk of the potion described in poetic fictions, which made men forget their country.”* Carteret

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* Yorke's Parliamentary Journal. Parl. Hist.

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found defenders in Winnington and Sandys ; * and the latter, in answer to Pitt, said that Lord Carteret's love to his country was equal to his abilities, which were acknowledged by the whole world." The address was carried by a majority of nearly two to one.

The opposition now, for the sake of secrecy, intrusted the direction of their conduct in parliament to a committee of six, and in the names of these men we read the party shades of which the whole body was made up ; Pitt, Lyttelton, and Waller were Whigs, Dodington also was generally of that party. The other two, Sir J. Cotton and Sir Watkin W. Wynn, were Tories.

The next attempt was for an address to disband the Hanoverian troops, and Pitt again led on the attack. " His majesty," said the orator, " yet stands on the firm ground of the people's affections, though on the brink of a precipice ; it is the duty of parliament to snatch him from the gulf where an infamous minister has placed him, and not throw paltry flowers on the edge of it to conceal the danger. It may be a rough but it is a friendly hand which is stretched out to remove him." He ridiculed the testimony of those of the military ministers who had spoken in favour of these troops. " What they have said is truth, but

* Sandys's patent was not made out until the 22d of December.

they have suppressed a large part of it. Very wise are they to speak with caution—the hand of power is over them.” He concluded with a description of the situation of the king—“hemmed in by German officers and one English minister, without an English heart.”

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Murray was again opposed to Pitt, and the debate called up all the principal speakers of the house. The argument appears to have gone in favour of the ministers, since Pitt's elder brother, who, at the commencement of the debate, described himself as just come up out of the country, very ill informed; at the end of it declared that, after what he had heard, he should vote against the motion.* The ministry succeeded—the motion was rejected by a majority of fifty.

A similar motion was made in the lords, where Chesterfield now almost singly maintained the cause of the opposition; but in that assembly it met with still less encouragement than it did in the commons.

Domestic occurrences and domestic legislation were now entirely neglected, it was foreign policy alone which engaged the attention of the nation. The contests between the parties were always upon points connected with this subject, and so various were the opinions held that the opposition members

* Yorke's Parliamentary Journal.

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often differed as completely among themselves as they did from the ministers. They were unanimous in resisting the demand for the payment of the Hanoverian troops; but when it was proposed to resist a similar vote for the British troops in Flanders, Pitt declared against the opposition. He said that the ministers had found the country involved in a war, and they should not be disarmed, and he canvassed his friends to support the minister. But the spirit of faction was too strong; the Tories declared against him, and Dodington, who envied him his talents and his influence, deserted him. A meeting was held at the Fountain, the members were nearly unanimous for the opposition, and Pitt so far bowed his high spirit to the idol party, that he promised to give a silent vote against his conviction, contenting himself with declaring that he would not speak upon the question.*

This attempt, like all the others yet made by the same party, signally failed, and the opposition was beginning to sink under repeated disappointments when an event occurred which, although it increased the disunion of the body, strengthened the sinews of one section of it. This was the report of the intended invasion of France. Hitherto the Tories, reduced (in parliament) as that party was by a long

* Glover's Memoirs.

course of adversity to a few determined partisans, had laboured without hope or object. Their continual and blind opposition had been prompted only by the desire to injure their opponents, for they could not hope to spoil them. Their situation was as hopeless in this advanced period of the reign of George II. as it had been at the accession of George I., and they were again become almost as ready as they had then been to welcome a Stuart king.

This disposition showed itself in the house of commons. Upon the message from the king announcing the danger, contrary to all ordinary precedent, a debate arose. Sir Francis Dashwood, in the exuberance of his joy, made a speech which well justified the remark in the message, that the invasion was undertaken in concert with disaffected persons at home. He descanted upon the conjunctures which were favourable to revolutions. "That of 1688," he said, "occurred when a weak, avaricious, narrow-minded prince was on the throne, a great part of the nation proscribed and forced into disaffection, and daily encroachments made upon the constitution. The expedition of the Prince of Orange was then called the invasion of the usurper; yet the person who was thus called saved this country."*

The inference intended by this speech was too

* Parliamentary History.

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undisguised. Sir William Yonge answered the speaker with great effect, and all the *moderate* Tories joined the minister.

Pitt and his friends continued to oppose the address upon different grounds. He denied the propriety of the declaration in the message, that there were disaffected persons in the kingdom. "If there are grounds for asserting this," he said, "what can be more impolitic than to animate the French with such an encouragement to prosecute their design? If there are none, how monstrous a thing is it in any minister to poison the fountain of truth, and fill the nation with mutual jealousies and distrusts!"

Mr. Coke answered him, and destroyed his dilemma. "If the concert with the disaffected is imaginary, I agree that those who advised this message deserve animadversion; if real, it surely is highly proper that parliament should be acquainted with every part of the danger. Nor can it animate the enemy to be told from the king's mouth what, from their own correspondences, they knew too well before." The ministerial address was carried.

Pitt began now to recede from his confederates. Lord Barrington made a factious motion for the intelligence received respecting the sailing of the French fleet; Waller and Dodington supported the motion, but Pitt and his friends stood aloof. Again, when papers were laid before the house explanatory

of the nature and urgency of the danger, a violent Tory member, Sir J. Phillips, again objected to the address; but Pitt said, "If ever confidence should be reposed in ministers, it should be now; and they are accountable to parliament for the use they make of it." He voted in favour of the motion.

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"It is observable," remarks Mr. Yorke, "that none of the leaders among the Tories, either on this occasion or that of the king's first message, showed the least sign of zeal and affection to the government; on the contrary, they treated the whole affair from beginning to end with the utmost indifference and ridicule."*

The difference between the Whig and Tory portions of the opposition was still clearer in the debate upon Lord Barrymore's arrest. He had been discovered corresponding with the agents of the pretender, and being a member of the house of commons, it was necessary that the consent of the house should be obtained for his confinement. The Tory leaders, Sir Watkin Wynn, Sir John Cotton, and Sir J. Phillips, loudly exclaimed that the privileges of the house had been violated, since Lord Barrymore had been secured before the house had notice of the charge. It was in vain that Pelham answered that such a privilege must amount to an immunity for crime, since the giving such a notice would be the

* Parliamentary Journal. Parl. Hist., vol. xiii., p. 568.

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signal for the accused member to escape, while his friends were prolonging the debate. Pitt, however, supported the ministers; and his speech probably prevented a division.

The Tories also opposed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; but their Whig allies deserted them. Pitt and Lyttelton walked down the house and went away, while Lord Barrington was speaking. The whole conduct of the Tories showed that the taint of Jacobitism had not been so thoroughly purged from them as their allies supposed; that of the Whigs showed that although they quarrelled among themselves when danger was distant, they were always ready to unite against a Tory or a Jacobite enemy.

It soon became known that a storm had dissipated the hopes of the Tories and removed the fears of the Whigs. The opposition became reunited and returned to their ordinary topics.

The disunion in the ministry increased; the declaration of war, now made by France, called forth new denunciations of Carteret from the opposition; these were more secretly echoed in the cabinet; and the disagreement between that minister and Newcastle was so undisguised, that they each refused to dine in the company of the other.* Meanwhile the French were every where successful, and the session closed in disgrace and discontent.

* Parliamentary Journal. Parl. Hist., vol. xiii., p. 685.

The vacation was passed in party intrigues and ministerial arrangements. The Pelhams were determined to rid themselves of their rival, and to this purpose they opened a negotiation with the opposition. The Pelhams had never been the object of attack, and as the chief wish of both parties was the dismissal of Carteret, the terms were soon agreed upon. The nine chiefs of the opposition were the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Chesterfield, Lords Gower and Cobham, Sir John Cotton, Lyttelton, Waller, Dodington, and Pitt. It was agreed among them that the question should be put, and that the minority should be bound by the majority. It was so; and Pelham's proposals were accepted by Bedford, Chesterfield, Gower, Pitt, and Lyttelton, against Cobham, Waller, Dodington, and Cotton.*

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Being thus sure of the opposition, the Pelhams now attacked Carteret, who at this time became, by the death of his mother, Earl Granville. That minister's grasp of power was exceedingly tenacious; he was conscious of the royal support; and he rather sought to dismiss the Pelhams than contemplated obedience to their command to resign. Granville turned himself in vain to the Tories, the opposition

* Glover's Memoirs. I have this author. He writes in the rejected many of the charges of spirit of a misanthrope. wholesale corruption brought by

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Whigs, and lastly, to the Walpole party; he found the ground on all sides occupied by his rivals. A memorial was now presented by Lord Hardwicke, and supported by the rest of the ministers, requiring his removal. The king resisted, hesitated, temporized, and, at last, submitted.*

The consequence of this victory was the formation of the administration which has been called the Broad-bottomed administration, from the circumstance of its being formed upon the basis of an union of the two factions. Lord Cobham was restored to his regiment of horse; Lyttelton, Fox, and Middlesex were made lords of the treasury; the Duke of Bedford became first lord of the admiralty; the Earl of Sandwich and George Grenville received places at the same board, and Pitt was promised the office of paymaster of the forces so soon as the king's personal prejudice could be overcome. The Duke of Dorset was made president of the council, and the Duke of Devonshire succeeded him as steward of the household. Chesterfield was sent ambassador to the Hague, with the lieutenancy of Ireland; and Dodington was made treasurer of the navy. Among the preferments of avowed and consistent Tories was

* Carteret's ministry (for the opposition insisted that he was the minister) was generally called the drunken administration. Drunkenness was a vice which Carteret inordinately indulged.

that of Earl Gower to the office of privy seal. Sir John Hynde Cotton also accepted the place of treasurer of the chamber; and Sir John Phillips, a seat at the board of trade. Granville was succeeded in the secretaryship by the Earl of Harrington, of whom the Duke of Newcastle entertained no jealousy.*

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* Glover's Memoirs. Coxe's memoirs of the Pelham Administration. Life of Lord Walpole, and Mention. Yorke's Parl. Journal.

CHAPTER XXI.

Conduct of the Broad-bottomed administration—Secession of the Tories—The short administration of the Earl of Bath—Issue of the intrigue against the Pelhams—Their restoration to office—Changes in the cabinet—Biographical anecdotes of Henry Fox—Death of Bolingbroke.

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THE career of the Broad-bottomed administration, from its formation in 1744 to its dissolution by the death of Pelham in 1754, offers much to delay the general historian, but little that is material to our present object. Contested points of domestic legislation were abandoned for the more exciting topic of foreign policy; the debates in parliament were not upon principles of government, but upon the prudence of certain alliances, or the cause of some recent reverses. An examination of these matters would

tend to a judgment of the ability of the man—not of the principles of his party.

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Although the name by which this administration is distinguished was intended to designate it as founded upon a perfect coalition of all parties: yet such is not the fact. Pelham's was essentially a Whig cabinet. At the commencement, a few Tories were admitted into subordinate stations, and the party was flattered by hopes that an entrance being once gained their influence would increase. They were disappointed—the object of the Pelhams had been to gain Pitt and his friends: the Tories had been included only for the sake of their allies, and now that the end was accomplished, they were treated with little respect. Phillips soon resigned his place, and put himself at the head of the opposition; and Sir John Cotton, although he did not think it necessary to resign, manifested a no less unequivocal hostility—he was at last turned out. With these men departed the Toryism of the Pelham administration. The Whigs were once again united, and the house of commons again presented the appearance of treasury benches filled with Whigs, and opposition benches filled with Tories. Nor was this opposition without power: although shorn of its glory by the withdrawal of the Whig talent which had given it popularity, it still possessed numbers; and upon one division in 1746, voted one hundred and thirty-two against one hun-

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dred and fifty-five*—a powerful minority to be formed by Tories in the reign of George II.

This ministry was by no means strong in its own union, or in the favour of the king. The employment of Chesterfield had been obtained from George with great difficulty; that of Pitt had been absolutely refused. Lords Granville and Bath still exercised a private influence, and several of the adherents of the former were still present in the cabinet. Among these, conspicuous for his power to harm and zeal in its exercise, was the Marquis of Tweeddale, who, as secretary of Scotland, had the charge of the suppression of the rebellion, which was now raging in Scotland and rolling onwards towards England. Acting under the control of Granville, this nobleman affected an unconquerable scepticism; and while the king's troops were flying before the impetuous assaults of the Highland swordsmen, doubted in London whether the pretender had yet landed.

To withstand the influence of such men, and to strengthen himself, Pelham found it now necessary to perform his promise to Pitt, and bring him into the cabinet. The application was made and refused; but it was repeated, and the king, indignant at being thus importuned, applied for assistance to

* They divided also 113 to 145, the advocates of this foolish proposition, the Whigs opposed it.—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. xiii.

Granville and Bath. They readily gave their advice. The Earl of Bath, coming from the closet, met the Earl of Harrington, whom he thought likely to render him assistance, and remarked, "I have advised the king to negative the appointment of Mr. Pitt, and to pursue proper measures upon the continent." Harrington, however, was not to be seduced; he received the information with the sarcastic remark, that, "those who dictate in private should be employed in public."

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This was what Bath intended: together with the king and Granville he had projected the expulsion of the Pelhams, and the formation of a new cabinet. He reckoned upon retaining many of the present members. The king answered for Harrington. Sir John Barnard was to be chancellor of the exchequer, and Winnington would manage the commons.

When Pitt observed that his friends were embarrassed by the promise he had received from them; acting in his own high and disinterested spirit, he at once released them from its performance.* But when Pelham conceded this point, he saw that something more was intended; the intrigues of Bath and Granville were suspected, and soon afterwards known: a meeting was held at the house of the lord chancellor, and a resolution was taken for a general and immediate resignation.

* Newcastle to Chesterfield. Memoirs of the Pelham Administration.

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This decisive conduct astonished, but did not alarm the king; he received the resignations with civility;* and immediately intrusted the treasury to the Earl of Bath. That nobleman now attempted to realize his project; he went from one section of the ministry to another, proffering the highest offices to persons who would not even parley with him. Not one of those upon whom he had counted joined him; and Harrington, having been closeted with the king, was dismissed with loud accusations of ingratitude, and became ever afterwards a particular object of the royal aversion. The Earl of Bath was now in a position of great distress. While his enemies stood aloof, silently enjoying his embarrassment, he was making every endeavour to obtain a colleague for Lord Granville, who had already kissed hands as secretary of state. The retired ministers laughed at his ineffectual endeavours; and one of their adherents sarcastically observed that it was unsafe to walk the streets at night for fear of being pressed for a cabinet counsellor.† The earl returned to the king, reported his ill success, and resigned the affair; but Granville, who was a bolder politician, advised the king to call his parlia-

* He got alarmed at last, but not until the Earl of Bath's failure. He then shut himself up, and declared he would receive no more of the white staves, gold

keys, and commissions that came pouring in upon him.

† Grey to Robinson, March 26, 1746. *Memoirs of the Pelham Administration.*

ment together, and lay before them an account of the grievances he had suffered from his ministers.* For this the king was not prepared; he was obliged, therefore, to confess himself at the mercy of the Pelhams, and to surrender at discretion.

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Winnington† was the channel of communication. George attempted at first to gratify his private malignity, and the abandonment of Harrington was required as a condition. But this his colleagues of course refused, and they were allowed to dictate their own terms.

Such is the history of what was at the time generally called, in irony, “The long administration.” It existed just forty-eight hours.‡

Upon the Pelhams resuming their appointments, they dismissed the Marquis of Tweeddale and abolished his office. Several minor placemen, creatures either of Granville or Bath, shared his fate. Pitt received the lucrative situation of joint treasurer of Ireland. This purgation was absolutely necessary; for Granville’s spirit of intrigue was indomitable. “Lord

* Glover’s Memoirs.

Winnington, for a long time chair-

† Winnington, when pressed by the king to join the Earl of Bath, said, “Sire, the new ministry can neither support your majesty nor themselves; they cannot depend on more than thirty-one lords and eighty commoners.”—*Glover*.

man of committees and a working member of the house, was well able to calculate upon this subject.

‡ Horace Walpole’s Memoirs. Coxe. Glover.

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Granville," writes an eyewitness, "is as jolly as ever; he laughs and drinks, owns it was mad, but says he would do it again to-morrow."* The ministers thus obtained a considerable accession of strength from the attempt to overthrow them, and consolidated their power by the imprudence of their enemies.

Pitt's disappointment at not obtaining a seat in the cabinet did not prevent his supporting the ministry with the whole of his commanding influence. He is represented by a contemporary as, at this time, swaying the house of commons, and uniting in himself the dignity of Wyndham, the wit of Pulteney, and the knowledge and judgment of Walpole. "He was right for the king, kind and respectful to the old corps, and resolute and contemptuous to the Tory opposition."* Even the hostility of the sovereign could not permanently exclude such a man from the cabinet. Within a year after the late arrangements the death of Winnington left the office of paymaster of the forces vacant; the petty enmity of the king had changed into awe of Pitt's gigantic powers. Pitt received the appointment and became a cabinet minister. Fox was, at the same time, made secretary at war.

Differences, with respect to foreign policy, still

* See the Correspondence in the Memoirs of the Pelham Administration.

continued in the ministry ; even the two brothers, who held the chief posts in it, were opposed upon this subject. The Duke of Newcastle was anxious to carry on the war with vigour, to extend our continental alliances and to subsidize Austria and Holland. His brother, more wisely, considered that the policy of this country was peace, and he objected to drain England of her treasure for the defence of temporary allies, and to squander her resources in quarrels in which she had no interest. Harrington coincided with Pelham ; and losing the confidence of the duke, was left exposed to the enmity of the king. Gratitude should have reminded Newcastle that that enmity had been provoked by fidelity to him ; but gratitude is not commonly among the weaknesses of statesmen. Harrington was removed from the office of secretary, and it was only the persevering friendship of Pelham which obtained for him the lieutenancy of Ireland.

Chesterfield's views of foreign policy were precisely those of Pelham and Harrington, yet he nevertheless seized upon the vacant office. He hoped to sustain himself by intrigue, and relied upon the king's mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth, as his great ally. The earl was successful with the mistress, but not so with the sovereign. The king's personal antipathies were often mere caprices ; but his dislike of Chesterfield is easily accounted for,

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when we find him and the earl at issue upon the construction of George I.'s will, and litigating the point. Chesterfield had been sent to the Hague in consequence of the triumph of the Pelhams; and at the audience which preceded his departure the only words addressed to him by the king were, "You have received your instructions, my lord."* George had strenuously opposed his appointment then, and he was no less averse to it now.

Such an aversion was not to be easily overcome. Favoured by the introduction of the countess, Chesterfield was received with civility, and even with familiarity; the king was pleased with his adulation, and perhaps admired his wit, but there his success ended; George would never converse with him upon affairs of state.†

* Maty's Life of Chesterfield.

† Fox to Hanbury Williams. *Memoirs of the Pelham Administration.* Coxe's *Life of Lord Walpole.* Chesterfield's want of influence is amusingly described in a letter to his friend, Sir Hanbury Williams, printed by Mr. Coxe. "I laid your application for a removal to Aix-la-Chapelle before the king, in the best manner and the best words that I possibly could, for I laid your

letter itself before him; but with what success I will, according to my custom, tell you very frankly and truly. His majesty read your letter with attention, and returned it without saying any thing upon it. I asked him what answer he commanded me to give you; he said, whatever I pleased. I asked whether that meant that he was pleased to grant your request, as I hoped it did; he answered, 'Nothing like it!' I urged that, in case the conference at Aix-la-

But the Duke of Newcastle, who was, as one of his contemporaries* remarks, as jealous of his colleagues as if they had each been favourite mistresses, dreaded lest Chesterfield should at last acquire the influence he coveted; he knew that his ideas of foreign policy closely resembled those of the discarded Harrington, and he somewhat improbably imagined that the frequent conferences with Lady Yarmouth had some reference to a design to supplant him upon this point. The duke, therefore, encroached upon Chesterfield's province, and established a private correspondence with Lord Sandwich. The earl could not long remain ignorant of this correspondence; he found himself a mere cipher in the cabinet, and only tolerated in the closet.—As he told a foreign minister, he had much to do and very little to say—he therefore resigned. This event occurred in February, 1748. Chesterfield's retirement was in accordance with his character; he sought no open rupture, nor did he pour forth his complaints in parliament. To the public he said

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Chapelle took the shape of a congress, it would be impossible for Lord Sandwich, alone, to go through the business and the forms; that I did not see that he could have so good a colleague as yourself, and, moreover, that your removal from Dresden to Aix-la-

Chapelle, where, if you did not go, somebody else must, would be a clear saving of your present appointments; to all which I had no other answer but that bow which is the signal for us to go out of the closet."

* Lord Waldegrave.

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that his declining health compelled him to withdraw from public affairs ; to his intimates he said, that, as he could neither serve the public nor his private friends, he thought his official employment useless, both to himself and his country ; to both he declared that he nevertheless would never again submit to the slavery of opposition. He kept his resolution.

Chesterfield's retirement created little sensation. " Lord Chesterfield," says Mr. Rigby, in a letter to Sir Hanbury Williams, " retired very quietly by himself, and the Duke of Bedford took the seals with as little noise or bustle as if two box-keepers at the playhouse had changed places."* The Duke of Bedford carried this prize from several competitors ; among these was Henry Fox, of whom we must no longer delay a more particular notice.

Henry Fox, the rival of the Earl of Chatham, was the second son of Sir Stephen Fox, a name which has already appeared in these pages. A man of very considerable parliamentary abilities, not only in open debate, but also in secret management ; he was implicated in the secret doings of the pensioned parliament. He is, however, spoken of as one who would not sacrifice his conscience to acquire a fortune ; and, in the reign of James II., he opposed that monarch in parliament, although his conduct was

* Coxe's Life of Lord Walpole.

followed by a banishment from court, and the loss of a post, valued at £10,000 a year.* Stephen, the eldest son of this manager of parliaments, was created Earl of Ilchester by the Walpole administration. To Henry descended his father's talents, and something like his father's career.

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Pitt and Fox were nearly the same age, and were, like Bolingbroke and Walpole, schoolfellows and rivals at Eton; both were younger brothers, both were distinguished for classical knowledge, and both commenced their parliamentary career at the same period. Here, however, the similitude ends. Fox had passed his early youth in extravagance and dissipation, and his pecuniary embarrassments drove him abroad; where he remained until a prospect of a seat in parliament recalled him home.

Upon entering the house of commons, Fox attached himself at once to Sir Robert Walpole. Nor can we assert that this attachment was directed altogether by interest, since it continued firm, when the fortune and the friends of the minister were together deserting him. The importance of his new ally soon became manifest to Walpole in parliament; he saw him, although not a complete orator, yet an able debater; his delivery was hesitating and inelegant; his speeches were, generally, neither long

* Reresby's Memoirs.

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to 1753.

nor premeditated, but there was a peculiar excellence in his prompt and concise reply. Walpole found that he was frank, agreeable, and winning in society, and clear and communicative in business; he gave him the office of surveyor-general of the board of works; and, upon his fall, recommended him, as we have already seen, to his successor. Under the Broad-bottomed administration he held office as a lord of the treasury; and, after the momentary usurpation of Bath and Granville, he was made secretary at war—the post which he now held.

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"For the house of commons he was, for some time, an ungraceful and unpopular speaker, the abundance of his matter overflowing his elocution: but the force of his reasoning has prevailed both over his own defects and those of his audience. He speaks with a strength and perspicuity of argument, that commands the admiration of an age apt to be more cheaply pleased. But his vanity cannot satisfy itself on the terms it could satisfy others; nor would he thank any man for his approbation, unless he were conscious of deserving it. But he carries this delicacy still further, and has been at the idle labour of making himself fame and honours, by pursuing a regular and steady plan, when art and eloquence would have carried him to an equal height, and made those fear him, who now only love him—if a party can love

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that his declining health compelled him to withdraw from public affairs ; to his intimates he said, that, as he could neither serve the public nor his private friends, he thought his official employment useless, both to himself and his country ; to both he declared that he nevertheless would never again submit to the slavery of opposition. He kept his resolution.

Chesterfield's retirement created little sensation. " Lord Chesterfield," says Mr. Rigby, in a letter to Sir Hanbury Williams, " retired very quietly by himself, and the Duke of Bedford took the seals with as little noise or bustle as if two box-keepers at the playhouse had changed places."* The Duke of Bedford carried this prize from several competitors ; among these was Henry Fox, of whom we must no longer delay a more particular notice.

Henry Fox, the rival of the Earl of Chatham, was the second son of Sir Stephen Fox, a name which has already appeared in these pages. A man of very considerable parliamentary abilities, not only in open debate, but also in secret management ; he was implicated in the secret doings of the pensioned parliament. He is, however, spoken of as one who would not sacrifice his conscience to acquire a fortune ; and, in the reign of James II., he opposed that monarch in parliament, although his conduct was

* Coxe's Life of Lord Walpole.

followed by a banishment from court, and the loss of a post, valued at £10,000 a year.* Stephen, the eldest son of this manager of parliaments, was created Earl of Ilchester by the Walpole administration. To Henry descended his father's talents, and something like his father's career.

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Pitt and Fox were nearly the same age, and were, like Bolingbroke and Walpole, schoolfellows and rivals at Eton; both were younger brothers, both were distinguished for classical knowledge, and both commenced their parliamentary career at the same period. Here, however, the similitude ends. Fox had passed his early youth in extravagance and dissipation, and his pecuniary embarrassments drove him abroad; where he remained until a prospect of a seat in parliament recalled him home.

Upon entering the house of commons, Fox attached himself at once to Sir Robert Walpole. Nor can we assert that this attachment was directed altogether by interest, since it continued firm, when the fortune and the friends of the minister were together deserting him. The importance of his new ally soon became manifest to Walpole in parliament; he saw him, although not a complete orator, yet an able debater; his delivery was hesitating and inelegant; his speeches were, generally, neither long

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most unsullied honour, and the most disinterested patriotism.

The character of Fox, which is drawn by the Earl

a man who they see is only connected with them by principles, not by prejudices.

“In another light one may discover another littleness in his conduct ; in the affairs of his office he is as minute and as full of application as if he were always to remain in the same post ; and as exact and knowing as if he always had been in it. He is as attentive to the solicitation and interests of others in his province as if he were making their fortune, not his own ; and, to the great detriment of the ministry, has turned one of the best sinecures under the government into one of the most laborious employments, at the same time imagining that the ease with which he executes it, will prevent a discovery of the innovation. He receives all officers who address to him with as little pride as if he were secure of innate nobility ; yet this defect of illustrious birth is a blemish which some of the greatest men have wanted to make them completely great. Tully had it ; had the happiness and glory of raising himself

from a private condition, but boasting of it, might as well have been noble : he degraded himself by usurping that prerogative of nobility, pride of what one can neither cause nor prevent.

“ I say nothing of his integrity, because I know nothing of it ; but that it has never been breathed upon even by suspicion ; it will be time enough to vindicate it when it has been impeached. He is as well bred as those who colour over timidity with gentleness of manners, and as bravely sincere, as those who take, or would have brutality taken for honesty ; but though his greatest freedom is polite, his greatest condescension is dignified with spirit ; and he can no more court his enemies than relax in kindness to his friends. Yet though he has more spirit than almost any man living, it is never looked upon as flowing from his passions, by the intimate connexion that it always preserves with his understanding. Yet his passions are very strong, he loves play, women more, and one woman more

of Waldegrave, as it is the most moderate, is probably the most faithful. "Few men," writes the earl, "have been more unpopular; yet, when I have asked his bitterest enemies what crimes they could allege against him, they always confined themselves to general accusation—that he was avaricious, encouraged jobs, had profligate friends, and dangerous connexions, but never could produce a particular fact of any weight or consequence."

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"Upon the whole, he has some faults, but more good qualities; is a man of sense and judgment, notwithstanding some indiscretion, and with small allowances for ambition, party, and politics, is a warm friend, a man of veracity, and a man of honour."*

Fox had many friends in the house of commons. He was there looked upon as a rising minister; and those who knew the king's aversion to Pitt, saw in Fox a successor to Pelham. The support of the Duke of Cumberland gave him, moreover, the power of rewarding his followers by the distribution of army patronage; but perhaps this advantage was

than all. The amiableness of his behaviour to her is only equalled by hers to him; but as your ladyship would not know a picture of this charming woman, when drawn with all her proper graceful virtues, and as that engaging ignorance

might lead you even into an uncertainty about the portrait of the gentleman, I shall lay down my pencil.

* The Earl of Waldegrave's Diary, pp. 24 and 25.

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more than counterpoised by the unpopularity of that duke, which of course involved his principal adherents. The Duke of Cumberland was particularly obnoxious to the young Prince of Wales, and hence all who now turned to salute the rising sun, railed at Fox as a man of arbitrary principles, and spoke of him as educated in the school of corruption, a proper minister to overturn the constitution, and, alluding to his attachment to the duke, to introduce a military government.

Fox had not the genius of Pitt, but he had much of the shrewdness of Walpole; his was a mind to love power rather than glory; and we may add, since his contemporaries agree upon this point, money rather than power; he studied men rather than principles; and he agreed with his master, that money was the most copious source of influence.*

Upon the present occasion, Fox, recalling the length and importance of his services, expected to succeed to the secretaryship.† The public voice named him as Chesterfield's successor; all those who

* Collins' Peerage. Coxe's Life of Lord Walpole. Glover's Memoirs. Horace Walpole's History of the last ten Years of the Reign of George II., and Letters, *passim*. Memoirs of the Earl of Waldegrave, &c.

† Fox to Williams, Feb. 17, O.S., 1748. Life of Lord Walpole and Memoirs of the Pelham Administration. In this letter, Fox affects an indifference upon the subject of the secretaryship, which it is plain he did not feel.

disliked the warlike system—and they were many and powerful—wished his success; the house of commons, where he was known and respected, was in his favour, and none were louder than Pitt and Lyttelton in supporting his claims. But the Duke of Newcastle had no intention of raising to an equality a man who was able to be a rival. He intrigued to obtain the appointment of Lord Sandwich, a creature of his own; and with that view recommended the Duke of Bedford, who he hoped would refuse the office. He was disappointed; the refusal of an appointment, from a consciousness of incapacity to fulfil its duties, appears to have been unknown at this period, when all fear of the Tories having vanished, the history of the Whig party is a series of personal struggles for promotion. The Duke of Bedford at once accepted the seals,* and both Fox and Sandwich were disappointed.

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This ministry, although so divided among themselves by personal jealousies, and so involved in intricate continental alliances, continued, notwithstanding the occasional reverses which our arms sustained, to be highly popular with the nation. In 1747 a general election took place; and one of the ministers could

* The duke said that he accepted the seals only for six months. Those who knew the characters of the two secretaries prophesied that they would not agree for six weeks.

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 to 1754. write, "We have a new parliament and a good one." Satisfied with seeing their idol, William Pitt, in the cabinet, the people forgot to inquire the extent of his influence. They confided all to him, and received, as indisputably good, every measure which he approved. Thus the affairs of government proceeded smoothly. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle,* concluded in this year, was welcomed with acclamations; the ministers' only apprehensions arose from each other.

Meanwhile the Tory party became almost extinct. It dwindled to a mere nucleus surrounded by those of the Whigs who, disgusted by defeat in some of the personal intrigues which were continually exploding, sought only an opportunity to indulge their spleen. Bolingbroke, who having returned to England upon the death of his father, had established himself in the seat of his ancestors at Battersea, still directed the remains of his once omnipotent faction, and laboured to link their fortunes with those of the heir to the crown. In his efforts he was, as usual, successful; in their event, as usual, unfortunate. In

* This treaty has been furiously assailed by several Tory historians who compare it to that of Utrecht. These writers seem to suppose that the same terms can be obtained from a victorious as ought to be forced from an humbled enemy. Bolingbroke thought differently. "If," he wrote, "the ministers had any hand in it, they are wiser than I thought them; if not, they are much luckier than they deserve to be."—*Memoirs of Bolingbroke*, vol. ii., p. 231.

February, 1748, Mr. Fox wrote to Sir Hanbury Williams, "The prince's court is little talked of and less regarded than ever;" but under the management of Bolingbroke his party soon regained its importance. Dodington was seduced by the prince from the lucrative office of treasurer of the navy by the promise, of a peerage, the management of the house of lords, and the seals for the southern department, upon his accession to the throne. Fortified by the alliance of this skilful adventurer, Bolingbroke extended his negotiations, and organized his plans. The ministerial phalanx was now impregnable from without; the hopes of the new opposition were again placed upon the death of the king. For this event all things had been prepared; at the commencement of 1751, the opposition appeared likely to be strengthened by the alliance of Pitt and his friends, who were disgusted at the subsidiary treaties in Germany,* and were unwilling to bear the unpopularity of measures they had no power to influence. But in March,

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* The system of subsidizing a crowd of petty German potentates with English gold, in order to raise the Archduke Joseph to the dignity of king of the Romans, was as distasteful to Pelham as it was to Pitt. The king and the Duke of Newcastle were both the contrivers and executors of this abortive scheme. Pelham was so irritated, that he, at one time, threatened to join the elder Horace Walpole and oppose the grant of the subsidies. —*Coxe's Life of Lord Walpole.*

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those who were waiting for the death of the king were startled by the sudden death of their own patron. This stroke of fortune again demolished the scheme which Bolingbroke had laboured so assiduously to perfect. The opposition Whigs shrunk back to their own faction, and the Tories were left naked and powerless. Fox spoke of this event as the annihilation of all opposition; he said he did not foresee a debate during that session, and thought the only difficulty the minister had to encounter was that of getting forty members together every day to make a house.*

The immediate effect of the death of the prince was the independence of the king. Newcastle, at the royal command, now formed a coalition with Granville. The earl became president of the council upon the condition that he was to give up all further intrigue to obtain a higher post, and be content to act a subordinate part. He complied; and what is far more extraordinary, performed his promise.

At the same time, the Duke of Bedford retired in disgust. Bedford and Sandwich had been favoured by the Duke of Cumberland, and therefore became hateful to Newcastle; the king refused to interfere, except against the first aggressor: a trial of endurance

* Fox to Williams, 1751. Coxe's Life of Walpole.

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The principal event in the party history of 1751, was the death of Bolingbroke, who died on the 15th of December, in his seventy-sixth year. The death of Lord Orford, in 1745, had been rather a loss to Mr. Pelham than to the Whig party; but the loss of Bolingbroke was felt by his faction.

Bolingbroke's life had been a life of slavery to his party. He had joined it when recovering from its prostration under William, and reviving under the warming smile of a Tory queen; he had assisted to revive its spirit, and bore part in the rapid assault by which it had recovered the power and emolument of ministerial rule; he took the lead in the bold counsels, the dark machinations, the unscrupulous deeds by which it attempted to perpetuate its dominion: he shared its prosperity—he was crushed by its fall. Still, while trembling for his life and meditating flight, the grief of his soul was, “that he saw the Tory party was gone.†” He had risked and lost his honours and his fortune in its service—he was ready to stake his life. At its command he joined the pretender; and if his sword was not drawn in the rebellion of 1715, it was

* Fox to Williams, Feb. 18, 1751. † Vide ante, vol. i., p. 612.

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only because the weight of his influence, at the French court, was more valuable than the service of any single arm. As he espoused, so he quitted the cause of the Stuarts, when he found that success was hopeless, and that the alliance of the pretender was a burden, not a benefit, to his party. England was now the only field in which his faction could be served. Scorning the loud accusations of treachery with which he was assailed, but, at the same time, delicately careful of his private honour, he negotiated for a restoration, and obtained it against all the efforts of his powerful rival. His party approved his conduct; for Wyndham received him with cordiality, and placed himself under his guidance. Again among his friends, he directed the attack he could not lead. His dazzling eloquence was now useless, for his seat in the house of peers was vacant; and eloquence had not yet learned to appeal to the people. But the power of his intellect remained, by that he contrived what others should execute: his magic power over the pen was not taken from him, for the spirit of Whiggism forbade that the press should be fettered—with this weapon he laboured for six-and-twenty years in the cause of his party. He scrupled at no disguise; he left untried no stratagem to gain for it popularity. He proclaimed it dead, and reproduced it with the mask of patriotism. He allied it with its rival, and declared that all distinctions had

ceased: he gained for it a powerful patron, and hoped that he had at last succeeded. But in vain—the mask was torn off, the alliance was repudiated—the patron died. The veteran Tory was disappointed, but not dismayed. Under the weight of accumulated sorrows, bowed down by family bereavements, and racked by excruciating diseases, he continued his service. The hand of death alone arrested the pen of the political pamphleteer.*

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Bolingbroke's career is an exception to the rule by which we judge a man's ability, by his fortunes. In two memorable instances, in which he had himself wrought out the pathway to success, an uncontrollable fortune interposed to disappoint his hopes. The sudden death of Queen Anne prevented his heading the Tory party, as lord high treasurer of England; the death of the Prince of Wales disappointed projects less brilliant, but more able, because more difficult. A mightier genius than that of Bolingbroke might have commanded success, but many, incalculably inferior, have achieved it.†

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The Tories will never forgive him for the testimony he has left, that the established church may be made the subject of beautiful eulogium, indignant defence, and deep outward reverence, while the heart feels only scorn for its priests and derision of its doctrines. Boling-

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The transactions of the years 1752 and 1753 offer little temptation for comment. The domestic policy of the government was wise and liberal, and so destitute were the Tories of topics for opposition that they were reduced to exclaim against the bill introduced to abolish the scandalous system of Fleet marriages, as an attempt to widen the distinction between the rich and the poor. So unavoidably does the state of opposition produce the language of democracy.

broke has disclosed the secret of political religion. Were it not for this reason Bolingbroke's public life would not be blackened by his party on account of his posthumous works. As Christians, we should condemn the tendency of these, but we should have little fear of their effects; but the fragments of the sword which shivers upon the shield of Christianity pierce the side of Toryism.

CHAPTER XXII.

Death of Pelham—Is succeeded by the Duke of Newcastle—Ministerial negotiations—Opposition of Pitt and Fox—Biographical anecdotes of William Murray—Difficulties and dissolution of the Newcastle administration—Appointment of Pitt as secretary of state—Joy of the nation—Prospects of his government—Is suddenly dismissed by the king—Difficulty of the king in an attempt to form a ministry.

IN March, 1754, the Pelham administration was dissolved, by the death of its chief, and the Whig party was again divided by the struggles of various competitors for the vacant dignity. Pelham was a minister of excellent intentions and moderate abilities ; he was a strict disciple of the Walpole school. He hated continental wars and continental alliances ; he was liberal in his views of government, and attentive to the resources of the country. One of the most beneficial acts of his administration was his reduction of the interest on the national debt to three per cent. In questions of foreign policy he was not, in effect, the minister. Upon these points, to use

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the words of Mr. Fox, "he was always drawn, and generally dragged by the Duke of Newcastle; and, though constantly disagreeing with his brother, yet, from his love of peace and his aversion to disunite the Whig party, he finally yielded, and continued to support his projects."*

Upon the death of his brother, all Newcastle's characteristic jealousy was aroused; nor was it appeased by his appointment to the vacant post. Pitt and Fox, conscious of their superiority, naturally expected shares in the administration corresponding in importance to their powers. Fox had originally applied for Pelham's appointment, but finding that he was anticipated in his application for the treasury, by Newcastle, he altered his demand to the secretaryship, which the duke had just vacated, and the management of the house of commons. The secre-

* Glover says of Pelham, "He tends the charge to Fox. How was originally an officer in the army, and a professed gamester, of a narrow mind, low parts, of an affable dissimulation and a plausible cunning, false to Sir Robert Walpole, who raised him, and ungrateful to the Earl of Bath who protected him." The character given of him by Horace Walpole is nearly as severe, and quite as false. He repeats the charge of ingratitude to Sir Robert Walpole, and extends the charge to Fox. How groundlessly I have already shown, by quotations from the letters which passed between Orford and Pelham, and the recommendation of Fox which these contain. Glover may be cited against any one of his contemporaries. He had no confidence in Pitt, and he speaks of George II. as a man "who, seated by fortune on a throne, was calculated by nature for a pawnbroker's shop."

taryship was readily granted, and Fox, thinking that his other request was also conceded, prepared to enter upon its duties. Pitt, although he disdained to solicit the seals, had no less expected the offer of them ; and when Fox's appointment was notified to him, he observed that he was informed of, not consulted upon the subject. Newcastle offered Pitt the ready excuse of the king's personal antipathy as the reason for passing over him. But the slighted statesman was not to be thus easily satisfied. There is no reason to suppose that any personal hostility existed at this time between Pitt and Fox : during the Walpole administration they had indeed had frequent and violent contests in parliament, but under Pelham they had acted in concert ; and when Fox was proposed as Chesterfield's successor in the secretaryship, Pitt had made a voluntary offer of his support. Fox received the overture with pleasure, and spoke of Pitt to Hanbury Williams as a man whom he liked and admired. Had Pitt been consulted upon this occasion it is probable that he would have acted a part as disinterested as he did upon the former occasion ; but, although he could despise the loss of the preferment, he could not be expected to brook the insult.

Fox had, however, now discovered that the secretaryship proffered to him was to be a mere vacant dignity, imposing abundance of responsibility but giving no real influence ; directly he understood

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that the management of the house of commons was to be intrusted to another, he returned the seals, declaring that he would never submit to such a degradation. They were given to Sir Thomas Robinson.*

Neither Pitt nor Fox chose to betray their resentment by a formal resignation. They retained their places, but they were silent upon all government questions. Upon indifferent subjects they generally opposed their colleagues, and visited them, singly, with the full power of their satire.

Sir Thomas Robinson, the newly-made secretary, was, from his experience abroad and his habits of business, well able to discharge the duties of his office; but he was utterly incompetent to take part in a debate. This deficiency he was not himself aware of, and his frequent attempts at oratory overcame the gravity of even the humblest of his dependents. Fox diligently assisted this person to make himself ridiculous.

Pitt had prescribed to himself a more difficult task; this was to silence William Murray, the attorney-general, an opponent worthy of his might.

The Honourable William Murray, afterwards Earl of Mansfield, was the eleventh child of the fifth Viscount Stormont. Born in Scotland, in the year 1704. Murray was early removed to London, where

* Dodington. The Earl of Waldegrave.

he received his education: in 1719, he became a king's scholar at Westminster school, where he evinced his talent, or his perseverance, by placing himself at the head of those who were sent from that school to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1723. Here he still more egregiously distinguished himself by carrying off the first prize offered for the best Latin verses upon the death of George I., a contest in which William Pitt was a competitor. After obtaining his degree at Oxford, his taste led him to undertake the usual routine of travel; but the slender pittance of a younger son was soon exhausted, and his poverty and his ambition at once pointed out the necessity of a profession. In 1730 he was called to the bar. His preparation for his profession had been rather those of an orator than a lawyer; he disdained the drudgery of a pleader's office, but he assiduously cultivated the graces of elocution, and has even been surprised studying attitudes in a mirror while Pope sat by to correct or approve. We read in the poetry of this, his warmest and most influential friend, that Murray's hours were not monopolized by the severe studies of his profession.* He was one of the select few who

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* " His house, embosomed in the grove,
Sacred to social life and social love,
Shall glitter o'er the pendent green
Where Thames reflects the visionary scene;
Thither the silver-sounding lyres
Shall call the smiling loves and young desires ;

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were admitted to the society of Bolingbroke, and he ranked among the youthful patriots who exclaimed against Sir Robert Walpole and corruption.

But Murray had good fortune* as well as talent; he was sought out by the success he would not woo. In the second year after he was called to the bar we find him engaged in appeals before the house of lords of a most important nature. His success was ever after certain. Abilities, even such as Murray's, may fail, but they can only fail through the absence of an opportunity for their development. In 1737 a fortunate accident, the illness of the senior counsel who was engaged with him for the defence in an action of crim. con., enabled him to signalize himself in the Nisi Prius Courts. He was so successful that he was accustomed to recur to this incident as the commencement of his fortune. "From this time

There every grace and muse shall throng,
Exalt the dance or animate the song.
There youths and nymphs, in consort gay,
Shall hail the rising, close the parting, day."

Imitations of Horace.

A curious description of a lawyer's domicile.

* It is said, however, that Murray was, at one time, reduced to great extremities, and had resolved to abandon his profession. When Lord Foley, hearing of his distress, offered him £200 out of the £500 a year which was allowed him by his father. It is added, that the offer was accepted, and the obligation remembered.—See *Parke's edition of Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors*.

business poured in upon me on all sides, and from a few hundred pounds a year I fortunately found myself, in every subsequent year, in possession of thousands."

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Although Murray was thus successful, and although he was in habits of strict intimacy with Bolingbroke, he confined his disapprobation of Walpole to private conversation. While that minister was in power he would never enter parliament, replying to all exhortations to that purpose, "Why should I be hasty in forming my attachment to one party while I enjoy the patronage of all parties." An answer which certainly savours more of prudence than patriotism.

Upon the formation of the Broad-bottomed administration, Murray was made solicitor-general; and, as it then became necessary that he should be in parliament, he obtained his election for Boroughbridge.

At this time it was not uncommon for young statesmen who had discovered great talent, but who were destitute of patrimony, to be enriched by the munificence of private persons. Thus, the Duchess of Marlborough left Pitt a legacy of £10,000 for his exertions in the cause of liberty. Murray was much suspected by the Whigs, and had been generally thought to belong to the Tory section of the opposition: the prudence of the lawyer rendered the fact difficult to

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discover ;* but the suspicion lost none of its force when Mr. Vernon, a reputed Jacobite, and although an intimate friend, yet in no degree related to Murray, left him at his death a valuable estate, in Chester and Derby.

Murray and Pitt were now opposed, and I have already quoted the comparison, made by a contemporary, of their powers. Murray continued to hold his office, cautiously abstained from hurting the jealousy of the Duke of Newcastle, sought for no voice in the council, and diligently supported all the measures of administration. In 1754 Sir Dudley Ryder, the attorney-general, was appointed chief justice of the King's Bench, and Murray, of course, succeeded him in the attorney-generalship. Pitt had a great respect for Murray's talents, although they were so dissimilar from his own. Long afterwards, when they were both members of the upper house, he said, "No man is better acquainted with his abilities and

* "Legge got up after Pitt ; gave his assent and consent to the maintenance of the dignity of the house of commons, which he hoped they would think best maintained by a steady adherence to Whig principles on which, whether sooner or later, whatever is to be my fate, I am determined to stand or fall. This, I suppose, was meant for Murray, who looked pale and miserable, most remarkably so ; but neither he nor any body else said a word."—*Fox to Hartington*. Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, App. p. 148. Horace Walpole, certainly a very inferior authority, describes him as "a man to serve the cause of power without sharing it."—*Memoirs*. This certainly is not Whiggism.

learning, nor has a greater respect for them than I have. I have had the pleasure of sitting with him in the other house, and always listened to him with attention. I have not now lost a word of what he said, nor did I ever."

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In person, Murray was handsome. "His countenance," says Mr. Butly, "was an assemblage of genius, dignity, and good-nature, which none could behold without reverence and regard. His voice, till it was affected by the years which passed over him, was perhaps unrivalled in its sweetness, and the mellifluous variety of its tones. He spoke slowly, sounding distinctly every letter of every word. In some instances, he had a great peculiarity of pronunciation;—'authority' and 'attachment,' two words of frequent use in the law, he always pronounced, 'awtawrity' and 'attaichment;' his expressions were sometimes low, he did not always observe the rules of grammar; there was great confusion in his periods, very often beginning without ending them, and involving his sentences in endless parentheses: yet such was the charm of his voice and action, and such the general beauty, propriety, and force of his expressions, that while he spoke, all these defects passed unnoticed."*

Such was the man whom Pitt now undertook to silence, not by vehement invectives upon grand ques-

* Butler's Reminiscences. Holliday's Life of Lord Mansfield.

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tions of national importance and absorbing interest, but by opposition upon secondary and indifferent subjects—by teaching him, upon these little occasions, to feel his inferiority, and dread his opponent's power. The great master of declamation was not long unsuccessful. In 1755 the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke found it necessary to apply to the king for leave to strengthen themselves by new alliances. The permission was reluctantly granted, and negotiations were accordingly opened with Pitt and Fox. Pitt demanded the seals, but added, that it was not his intention to be a secretary merely to write letters according to order, or to talk in parliament like a lawyer from a brief; but to be really a minister—conditions which the Duke of Newcastle thought presumptuous and preposterous, and at once applied to Fox. The secretary at war repeated the demands he had before made, and which were in effect the same as those made by Pitt: but Fox was supported by the influence of the Duke of Cumberland; he had never drawn upon him the hatred of the king; and he was less obnoxious to Newcastle, because less able. Fox received the seals; and Pitt and his friends, with the exception of Lyttelton, who was made chancellor of the exchequer,* went into open opposition.

* “A desertion,” says Lord Waldegrave, “which was resented with the greatest acrimony by the whole cousinhood.”

Now it was that the eloquence of Pitt, so long fettered by the bonds of office, again burst forth ; now recommenced the gladiatorial exhibitions which divided the applause of the nation between the skill of the debater and the thunder of the orator. The people seceded with Pitt; and the Newcastle administration, hitherto so popular, became suddenly the object of popular hatred and derision. Accidental circumstances, also, gave Pitt a superiority in the merits as well as in the management of the debates. "During the whole session of 1755-6," says an eyewitness, "Mr. Pitt found occasion, in every debate, to confound the ministerial orators. His vehement invectives were awful to Murray,* terrible to Hume Campbell ; and no malefactor under the stripes of an executioner was ever more forlorn and helpless than Fox appeared under the lash of Pitt's eloquence : shrewd and able in parliament as he confessedly is. Dodington sheltered himself in silence."†

The effects of this storm of eloquence were soon visible in the ministerial ranks. Murray shrunk from the contest, and upon a vacancy occurring in the chief justiceship, insisted upon retiring with that appointment, and a seat in the house of lords. New-

* "I sat next to Murray, who in a letter printed in the Appendix suffered for an hour," writes Fox to Waldegrave's Diary.

† Glover.

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castle in vain entreated and tempted him to stay. The cautious lawyer saw the ruin that was approaching; Pitt had read him a lesson he could not forget. The event justified his foresight. It will be remembered that at this time the encroachments of the French in America had provoked reprisals which had produced a war. The loss of Minorca, and the failure of Admiral Byng appeared to give promise that it would be conducted with the same imbecility which had rendered the history of the last a chronicle of disasters. These events threw the new ministry into the utmost consternation. Fox felt that he was not treated with the confidence for which he had stipulated;* he feared that some personal attack would be made upon him; and he knew that in such a case he should be but faintly supported. He therefore intimated his intention to resign. The Duke of Newcastle, terrified at this desertion, and unwilling to contemplate the resignation of the power to which he had been so long accustomed, applied in every quarter for assistance; but without success. Pitt would listen to no terms, and absolutely refused to treat; and Granville, who had received the office of president of the council upon

* He suffered also many annoyances from the king, who was accustomed to throw out ungracious hints, how a man might be a talker in the house of commons, though, in every other respect, a very indifferent secretary. Lord Waldegrave's Diary.

condition that he would aspire no higher, kept his word, and refused to exchange posts with him. At last, Newcastle reluctantly resigned; and the king called upon Fox to form an administration. Fox was still less successful in his application to Pitt. It is said that he waited personally on the autocrat of the opposition, and stated his majesty's anxiety that he should come into his service. "You, sir!" was Pitt's reply, "Are you come from the king? When his majesty shall condescend to signify his pleasure to me, by any one entitled to my confidence and esteem, I shall not be wanting in expressions of duty to his majesty and devotion to his service. I have no answer to return by you."*

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All hope being thus extinguished, Newcastle and his party resigned themselves to their fate; and the king, with undisguised reluctance, intrusted the formation of a ministry to Pitt. No step could be more popular. In the words of one who did not share the general enthusiasm,† "The eyes of an afflicted, despairing nation were now lifted up to a private

* Glover, p. 95. I have transcribed this anecdote, because it is given upon respectable authority; but is quite at variance with what we know of the intercourse of Pitt and Fox from the letters of Fox and the Diary of Lord Melcombe. In my account of Fox's conduct,

at this time, I have attempted to reconcile the accounts of Glover, Waldegrave, and Dodington. The two first agree in opposition to Dodington, that it was Fox's resignation which broke up the ministry.

† Glover.

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gentleman, of a slender fortune ; wanting the parade of birth or title, of no family influence, except by marriage with Lord Temple's sister, and even confined to a narrow circle of friends and acquaintances. Yet, under these circumstances, Pitt was considered as the only saviour of England."

Pitt was, at this time, confined to his bed by the gout ; but he instantly made his arrangements. The Duke of Devonshire, although well qualified by hereditary title to make to himself a party, had been content to forward the principles instead of grasping at the honours of his faction ; he was placed at the head of the treasury. The Earl of Temple, who, as Richard Grenville, had been Pitt's earliest ally, was first lord of the admiralty. Pitt was secretary of state, and Holderness, at the urgent instance of the king, remained his colleague. George Grenville received the office of treasurer of the navy, and Legge returned to his post of chancellor of the exchequer.

The resignation of the Earl of Hardwicke was regretted by the nation in general. He had been lord chancellor nearly twenty years ; he had executed his high office with integrity and diligence ; and as a judge, he was esteemed second to none who had preceded him on the bench. As a statesman, he was moderate in his counsels, consistent in his conduct, and faithful in his alliances : if he was dis-

liked, it was only by those who saw in him the chief pillar of the ministry they wished to destroy.*

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As Pitt had no eminent lawyer among his peculiar party, the great seal was put in commission.

The treasury was settled on the 16th of November (1756); the admiralty, on the 20th; and Mr. Pitt received the seals on the 4th of December, two days after the parliament had met.

The formation of this ministry was welcomed with a shout of approbation; the joy throughout the country was universal; the most rigid prognosticators of ill reversed their prophecies, and promised future prosperity which should efface the recollection of past misfortunes. Old patriots, who had long retired from the stage of public life, came forward to hail the promised millennium, and foremost amongst these was the Earl of Westmoreland, a veteran Whig, slow, but solid; one who would pursue his principles though they led to a precipice, and scorned to listen for a moment to the

* The Earl of Hardwicke had been so long known and spoken of as lord chancellor, that many of his friends had even forgotten his hereditary title. Upon his first appearance at the royal levee after his resignation, he was announced as the Earl of Hardwicke; but the king, with whom he had been much in favour, not recognising the title, merely replied by his usual cold question, "How long has his lordship been in town?" When he advanced, the alteration in his appearance (caused by the absence of the wig and robes) completed the delusion. The earl left the presence-chamber without having been recognised by the master he had served so long.

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language of expediency. Thus he had voted against the Septennial bill, he had supported every place bill, and he had been constant in his opposition to the maintenance of a standing army. Unchanged in principles, this nobleman now came forward to give his sanction to Pitt's elevation.* The country gentlemen deserted their hounds and their horses to range themselves around the popular idol; the Prince of Wales and his friends strengthened him with their support;† the metropolis hailed his elevation, and the whole populace participated in his triumph.

But all this popularity could not obtain for the new ministry a decisive and tractable majority in parliament; nor could it remove the dislike of the king. Pitt was confined nearly the whole of the winter by the gout; and during this time the business both of the parliament and the closet, was to be transacted by his colleagues. When Pitt could himself attend the

* Horace Walpole accuses this nobleman of being a Jacobite, because he had the confidence of the University of Oxford; but Horace hated Westmoreland for his opposition to his father. I therefore follow Glover.

† Pitt had obtained the countenance of the Prince of Wales through the favour and introduc-

tion of Lord Bute, who had obtained the confidence (and scandal falsely said the favours) of the Princess of Wales. Lord Waldegrave, whom he supplanted at Leicester House, describes him (in effect) as a fine showy man, who looked habitually wise, affected great erudition, pretended to great depth, and was very shallow.

king, he had no great cause of complaint. Awed by his spirit, the king did not break the forms of civility to him; but when the Earl of Temple was his representative, the earl complained that he met with nothing but insults and ill manners. The counsels of the new minister were slighted; his measures were opposed; and all his endeavours thwarted: in three months it became manifest, that he was only a nominal minister, without a grain of power. Now came the trial of Byng. This unhappy man, memorable only in his death, had been made by the late administration the scape-goat which should bear away all their sins. To him, therefore, they had attributed the loss of Minorca; and the people, stung with the national disgrace, hanged him in effigy in every village in the empire, and clamoured for his blood. Byng was tried and condemned. The question of the justice of his sentence has been too often discussed to require particular notice here. Few will now deny that the punishment of an error in judgment, as a capital crime, was as palpably absurd as it was unjust; or that George II., by insisting upon carrying into effect a sentence which the tribunal by which it was passed never supposed would be executed—and that contrary to the advice of his responsible ministers—was morally guilty of a murder.

Pitt's conduct, on this occasion, was independent and humane; he applied to the king to remit the

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 XXII. house of commons expected it. The king made a
 A. D. 1754 cold, but a shrewd reply, “ Sir, you have taught me
 to 1757. to look for the sense of my subjects in another place
 than in the house of commons.”*

Disappointed in the closet, Pitt did not hesitate to express his sentiments in the house of commons when the subject came incidentally before that assembly. Upon this occasion, he spoke without his accustomed warmth, but in terms of moderation ; declaring his desire that mere justice might be done, which he thought would suffer, if so inconsistent and preposterous a sentence should take place without any further examination.

This modest exercise of the power of independent judgment at once destroyed the minister’s popularity. The multitudes which waited for their victim were ready to include in his fate all who should attempt his rescue. Pitt became as hated as he had been loved, and Byng was executed. Pitt, after recurring to his conduct upon this occasion, and the loss of popularity he had suffered, repeated the words he had then used in the house of commons : “ I thank God, I felt more than popularity—I felt justice.”

The loss of Pitt’s popularity, however, included the loss of his power ; for the king, who had tolerated

* Horace Walpole’s Memoirs.

him only because he feared him, thought that he might now venture to manifest his dislike. In February the Earl of Waldegrave, a respectable nobleman, who had held the office of governor to the young Prince of Wales, who was esteemed for his integrity, who was not destitute of talent, for his memoirs may be proposed as a model for that style of composition, but who knew nothing of public business, and had never discovered any parliamentary ability, waited upon the king to return thanks for an office to which he had succeeded by the death of Lord Walpole. The king seized this occasion to relate his grievances. He expressed his dislike to Pitt and Temple in very strong terms. The secretary, he said, made him long speeches which possibly might be very fine, but were greatly beyond his comprehension, and his letters were affected, formal, and pedantic—no very cogent reasons for discarding a minister who had been recommended by the national voice. As to Temple, he said he was so disagreeable a fellow there was no bearing him; when he attempted to argue he was pert, and sometimes insolent; when he meant to be civil he was exceedingly troublesome, and in the business of the office he was totally ignorant. He added, that he did not look upon himself as king while he was in the hands of these scoundrels, and sent Waldegrave to Newcastle to beg him to come to his rescue. A long ne-

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gotiation with Newcastle ensued, in which the duke discovered all his characteristic jealousy, timidity, irresolution, and cunning. Unwilling to admit a partner to his power, yet afraid to incur an undivided responsibility, he recalled to-day the propositions he made but yesterday; and at length by his vacillating conduct so disgusted the king, that he in a fit of despair offered the seals to Waldegrave. This nobleman had too much good sense to accept the offer; but the circumstance shows into what difficulties the king's capricious personal antipathies had betrayed him. A prolonged negotiation followed; Fox at length undertook to form a cabinet, and upon this assurance Temple was at once dismissed. Pitt did not immediately resign, he was resolved not to save his enemies the credit of his dismissal, and continued the duties of his office and his attendance at court, waiting, in calm dignity, until the king made known his pleasure. He was not kept long in suspense: when the king found he would not resign he dismissed him, and called upon Fox to fulfil his engagement.

But this was a task more difficult than had been foreseen. Pitt's dismissal suddenly restored him to the fulness of his former popularity; his conduct with regard to Byng was either forgotten, or, the momentary fury having passed away, was remembered only to be praised. He was now looked upon as a victim to the courtier arts of those who surrounded

the throne ; as a man suffering for his fidelity to the people. Pitt was flattered by addresses from all parts of the kingdom, and there was scarcely a considerable town which did not vote him its freedom. Under such circumstances persons were found very unwilling to engage themselves as his opponents ; and, among all those to whom Fox applied, Dodington alone was induced, by the offer of a profitable place, to face the danger.

The design of making Fox the prime minister was therefore necessarily abandoned, and the inquiry into the loss of Minorca having been decently gone through, the Duke of Newcastle recovered courage, and offered to take the treasury, excluding Pitt and Temple. He also failed in the attempt. The king now insisted that Waldegrave should make the attempt, nor was he convinced of the impracticability of this design until Holderness, his own creature, who had been promoted and sustained entirely by the royal influence, resigned the seals he held. Lord Mansfield was next tried, but with the same success. Nor could the king succeed in obtaining a cabinet until he abandoned his opposition to Pitt and Temple, sacrificed his friends, and committed the negotiations to Lord Hardwicke, the old and faithful friend of the Duke of Newcastle.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

The Pitt administration—Energy and supremacy of Pitt—The present a Whig administration—State of the Whig principle—Biographical anecdotes of Charles Pratt—Habeas Corpus bill—Foreign policy of Pitt—Death of George II.

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THE king's ignorance of the state of parties in the kingdom and of the constitution of our government is strongly shown by this pertinacious intriguing, in order to exclude from his service the only able men in parliament. It ended in a coalition taking place between Newcastle and Pitt. Newcastle returned to the treasury, Pitt received back the seals, Temple was privy seal, and Legge returned to his office of chancellor of the exchequer. Fox compromised his dignity, by accepting the pay office.

It was the management of Newcastle which had so entirely defeated the efforts of Fox, Waldegrave, and Mansfield. So strong a party had that nobleman in both

houses, that the king was accustomed to speak of all the subordinate officials as Newcastle's footmen.*

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The duke had, at first, fled from office in terror; but when he looked back, and found he was safe from pursuit and surrounded by friends, he recovered his assurance. He knew that without any apparent exertion he could, by covertly deranging the schemes of others, reduce affairs to such a state that he would be called back upon his own terms. He fully succeeded.

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Now really commenced the Pitt administration, for Pitt, like Pelham, had enjoyed no power until he had stormed the cabinet, and bound the king. In the former year he had told the Duke of Devonshire that "he was sure he could save the country, and he was equally sure no man else could;" he now enjoyed the opportunity of making good his vaunt. It belongs not to our subject to tell how well he fulfilled it. From the moment that he assumed the reins of government the panic which had paralyzed our efforts disappeared; instead of mourning over former disgraces, and dreading future defeats, the nation assumed, in a moment, an air of confidence, and awaited with impatience for tidings of victory. The narrator of party-struggles has nothing to do with this era; party was extinct; the mastery of Pitt's genius was

* Walpole's Memoirs.

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felt in every bosom ; dazzled by his genius, borne onward by a tide of success, the nation followed his counsels as the dictates of a superior being, and rose, as one man, to do his bidding. France, lately so insolent, felt his power and bled from every limb ; that people, who lately revelled in the anticipation of invading and plundering Britain, now fled the seas at our approach, and trembled, even upon their own shores. In each of the four quarters of the globe were our arms at the same time triumphant ; in each our alliance was deemed the best assurance of safety.

It was not the Whig or the Tory party which did all this—it was William Pitt. The plan of operations was his, his colleagues heard and obeyed. “ It will be impossible to have so many ships prepared so soon,” objected Lord Anson, when Pitt had projected the expedition to Rochfort. “ If,” was the reply, “ these ships are not ready at the time specified I shall impeach your lordship in the house of commons.”—The ships *were* ready.*

* An anecdote is preserved side to consult upon any important point which arose. Upon one occasion the Duke of Newcastle was thus summoned. The duke was, his constantly recurring attacks of gout the secretary could bear no so much so that it was a subject fire in his chamber, and he often sometimes of merriment, but not sent for his colleagues to his bed- unfrequently of considerable in-

Pitt was one of those few men who have been able to serve their country without submitting to the bondage of a party. He was a Whig in the best and purest sense of that term. He was such as Russell would have been had nature bestowed upon him genius, and fortune the government of an empire. When was the voice of the first Pitt ever raised against the rights of the people? who has ever been so constant and so eloquent in their defence? He was foremost among those who sought to promote the happiness of the many, by recovering the usurpations of the few; and whenever the all-engrossing subject of the war allowed him a moment for domestic legis-

convenience to his friends. Walpole mentions that he frequently ordered all the windows in the house of lords to be closed during the hottest weather, and the rest of the peers sat gasping with heat, in order that the duke might not take cold. This testy valetudinarian was horror-stricken at finding himself in a fireless room, on a chilly wintry day, but Pitt would allow no fire, and he was obliged to submit. The subject of deliberation was the expedition under Admiral Hawke, which had its event in the annihilation of the French navy. Newcastle opposed it, on account of the advanced

state of the season, and the debate was prolonged until he was shivering with cold. Casting his eyes round the room, he discovered another bed in the opposite corner, he drew his cloak closely round him, and got into it, pulling the bedclothes over him. Thus these two statesmen lay, engaged in an animated argument, upon the issue of which depended the fortune of two nations, when Sir Charles Frederick came in and discovered their ludicrous situation. This anecdote is told in the *Walpoliana*, and also by Mr. Thackeray, who copies it from the "*Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose.*"

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lation, his measures testified the colour of the principles whence they sprung. Let his militia bill show that he was not afraid to trust even the power of the sword in the hands of the people.

It is highly necessary, at this period of our history, to look at principles and not at names. The term Whig was popular with the nation and patronized by the king; the man who sought popularity, therefore, would call himself a Whig, and the most abject courtier would not admit that he was a Tory. The most distinctive character of Whiggism, its progressive principle, was stayed by foreign wars, and a state of war has always proved favourable to domestic abuses. Among the men who styled themselves the Whig party were numbers who were Tories in heart, and who only postponed their principles to their immediate interest. But at present these could not be distinguished; the different seed were sown together, it required an interval of peace and a few storms of kingly displeasure before we could know them by their fruits.

We are not, therefore, to look upon William Pitt as one who vacillated between Whigs and Tories, and can be claimed by neither; or doubt his title to be esteemed a Whig because the retainers of the Duke of Newcastle, the majority of whom were Tories in disguise, sometimes upbraided him as a deserter. Pitt may be regarded as the best specimen which

can be given of the Whig principle at this time. It has been said that Pitt was what Russell would have been ; but it is not to be inferred that Russell and Pitt, therefore, held precisely the same sentiments upon the principles of government. Russell sought only for the people an exemption from tyranny, Pitt demanded for them a large share of political power. During the interval between these two men Whiggism* had made considerable advances. In the history of the science of government Pitt was to Russell what Galileo was to Aristotle—there was still room for a Newton.

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Among the men who were honoured by the friendship of Pitt, and who were brought forward by his patronage, was Charles Pratt, afterwards Earl Camden, a man well worthy of the friendship he inspired. Charles was the eighth son of Sir John Pratt, who had been lord chief justice of the King's Bench, but died when this son was yet an infant. In common with nearly all the distinguished characters of this age, Pratt received the rudiments of education at Eton, and was assisted into life by the endowments of that college. On the election, in 1731, being then eighteen years

* The frequent occurrence of our language—they are especially these words, Whiggism and Toryism, will be censured by purists. I can only reply that the words, though barbarous, are necessary to convey the constantly recurring idea so to me. It is highly inconvenient to an author to be compelled to convey the constantly recurring idea of his subject by a circumlocution.

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old, he obtained one of the fellowships at King's College, Cambridge, took his degree in the university, and chose the law as a profession. In due time he was called to the bar, and was assiduous in his attendance at Westminster Hall. But he was embarked in a profession in which fortune as well as ability is requisite to success. For many years he was unnoticed, his resources became nearly exhausted, and his spirit sunk under continual disappointment: despairing of success, he resolved to relinquish his profession and abandon his country;* but the advice of his friends restrained him. His perseverance was at length rewarded by a small share of practice, and in 1752 he was well known in his profession. In that year he became conspicuous as an advocate of popular rights, being retained for the defendant upon the prosecution of Owen for publishing the case of Alexander Murray. Pratt distinguished himself upon this occasion by a bold and

* One of his brothers was in the East Indies, and thither he had some idea of following him. Among others of his friends, Dr. Sneyd Davies, his school and college friend, dissuaded him; and it

was probably at this time that he wrote the epistle to Pratt, which appears in Dodsley's Collection, vol. vi., p. 266. After enumerating the great sages of the law, he adds,

“ — Let not these great names
Damp but excite; nor Murray's praise obscure
Thy younger merit. Know these lights, ere yet
To noonday lustre kindled, had their dawn.”

constitutional argument, worthy of the sturdier and less courtly days of Whiggism. Lord Mansfield had scarcely taken his seat upon the bench when he threw aside the disguise under which he had risen, and discovered a spirit which rendered him worthy to be a Jacobite. To him and to his discretionary judgments, which bid fair to destroy the landmarks of our laws, Pratt became a determined opponent; and he afterwards, in a case well remembered by lawyers, pronounced from the bench an eloquent condemnation of his system. “The discretion of a judge is the law of tyrants; it is always unknown, it is different in different men; it is casual, and depends upon constitution, temper, and passion. In the best it is oftentimes caprice, in the worst it is every vice, folly, and passion to which human nature is liable.”*

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Pratt now increased in popularity and practice; in 1754 he became member of parliament for the borough of Downton; in 1759 the friendship of Pitt had recommended him to the recordership of Bath. He was now a very popular advocate at the bar of the house of commons,† and Pitt insisted upon raising him to the attorney-generalship without having undergone the customary probation as solicitor-general. In this office his conduct was irreproachable, “and,”

* L. C. J. Pratt's judgment in *Doe dem. Hindson v. Kersey*, 4to. London, 1764.

† Horace Walpole's Memoirs.

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says a contemporary, who may always be believed where he praises, "it reflected no small honour on him that the first advocate of the crown should appear the firmest advocate against prerogative."*

To this lawyer, in 1758, Pitt intrusted the task of obtaining a bill to explain and extend the operation of the writ of habeas corpus. Certain important doubts had recently arisen upon this subject, and Lord Mansfield's decisions upon these points had been such, that an Englishman could no longer consider himself possessed of that security against the uncertain detention of his person which had so long been thought his birthright. The bill now introduced served as a touchstone to discover the Whigs in principle from the Whigs in name. The king openly declared against it; Mansfield put forth all his influence to destroy it; and even Hardwicke, led astray by professional prejudices, joined his old enemy in its opposition. Supported by Pitt and the speaker, the bill passed easily through the commons, very few voices, among which, however, was that of Fox, being raised against it. The debate in the lords shows the influence of the crown in that assembly, and how lightly many of those who called themselves Whigs

* Horace Walpole's Memoirs. Camden, that has been followed
See also, European Magazine, vol. by Parke and others:—and vol.
xiii., which contains a memoir of lxiv. of the Gentleman's Magazine.

held the principles of their party. Lord Temple was the only orator who appeared heartily in favour of the bill.* Against it, we find arrayed the representatives of the houses of Cavendish and Russell, followed by a long list of illustrious names, all headed by two law lords, who, having gained an ascendancy over them by their ready prophecies of danger, now led them at their will. It was in vain that Lord Temple taunted his brother peers with their subserviency—in vain, that he attempted to arouse the slumbering patriotism of the Duke of Devonshire by reading the speech delivered by his great ancestor the Earl of Devonshire, in the conference between the houses on the former bill: after a fruitless reference to the judges, Mansfield opposed the measure in a speech which excited the admiration of the most hostile of his auditors. The Tory opposition proposed a compromise, and promised to introduce a measure in the next session which should pass with unanimity. The terms were accepted, but never fulfilled.

The only topic upon which the opposition could promise themselves an advantage was that of continental politics. They loudly complained of the inconsistency of the minister, who, after inveighing

* Granville spoke for it; but in what bad repute it was held at attended no more, when he found St. James's.—*Walpole's Memoirs*.

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so long against German alliances and Hanoverian policy, had agreed to subsidize the King of Prussia with the annual sum of £670,000, and to take into pay the army which had been dispersed by the convention of Closter-Seven. The answer was, that the policy he had condemned was pursued solely for the sake of Hanover; that the policy he had adopted was pursued for the sake of Britain; that the present quarrel was essentially English, in which Hanover was concerned no otherwise than as an ally—an ally upon whom England had drawn hostility, and whom England was bound in honour to defend. A weaker argument, but a more powerful consideration was, that the present policy was highly popular. The energy and heroism of the King of Prussia had thrown an air of chivalry over the contest; and moreover it was recommended by success. The people contemplated with pride the high position which England now held among nations: they saw that the stern resolution of their minister was respected throughout Europe; and they had seen the Dutch, who knew that he never threatened in vain, humble themselves at once before his menace. They were still more satisfied that the minister relied upon them for support, and scorned to rule them by corrupting their representatives.

In October, 1760, George II. died suddenly.

The character of this monarch, so far as it in-

fluenced the state of parties, needs no review. He was attached to the name, not to the principles of the Whigs; he knew that the party so called were the stanch supporters of his house; but he knew little of and cared less for the principles they professed. His other motives of conduct were personal preferences and antipathies, and a particular affection for his electorate.

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Character of George III. upon his accession—Rise of the Earl of Bute
—Alterations in the cabinet—Resignation of Pitt—Of the Duke of
Newcastle—Overthrow of the Whigs, and commencement of the
supremacy of the Tories.

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GEORGE III. was in his twenty-third year when he ascended the throne. His education had not been that which is calculated to form a wise or a popular monarch. His tutors, the Bishop of Salisbury, Mr. Stone, and Mr. Scott were men of sense, learning, and good intentions; but they had little to do with the moulding of the mind of their pupil. This prince's early youth had been passed in the nursery, amid the adulation of weak women and ignorant pages; and he emerged from this tutelage only to become an instrument in the hands of his mother to

work a petty opposition to his grandfather. Being thus continually in the hands of persons whose interest it was to flatter and deceive, we cannot expect to find him possessed of any knowledge of mankind, or evincing any powers of self-control. His character is, nevertheless, a most singular consequence of such an education; and we are rather inclined to wonder at finding him what he was, than disappointed at not finding him what we could wish him to have been. We expect to see in a youth accustomed from infancy to unvaried indulgence, never subjected to control, and living at a period when morality was so little esteemed that vice dispensed with a disguise, strong passions which discover themselves in headlong vices and glittering virtues. But George was destitute of both. The Earl of Waldegrave, who enjoyed such peculiar opportunities of knowing him, has sketched his character when he was entering on his twenty-first year, and his sketch bears internal evidence of faithful resemblance. According to this authority, he possessed abilities which, although not excellent, wanted only a proper cultivation to be tolerable: he was honest, but not generous; religious, but not charitable; willing to act justly, but not active to discover what was just; indifferent to pleasure, but averse to business; not violent in his resentments, but moody,

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sullen, and unforgiving towards those who provoked or incurred his displeasure.*

Such was the character of the new monarch as it appeared to his contemporaries. During the course of a long reign we shall, of course, see it vary as he ripens into experienced manhood, or droops into old age; but we shall never find the lineaments of his youth altogether effaced.

George III. was highly fortunate in the period at which he ascended the throne; he found the English arms every where triumphant, and the councils of the nation directed by a ministry which scarcely knew the voice of opposition. But the formation of this ministry was by no means so agreeable to the monarch as it was to the people. The influence of the Earl of Bute at Leicester House had long been an object of derision to the people—derision which was expressed in popular songs and broad caricatures;†

* Other accounts of the prince at this age agree in the main with this which I have condensed from Waldegrave's Diary. His mother's chief praise of him, when speaking to Dodington, was, that he was very honest but childish for his age (*Dodington's Diary*). Lady Hervey spoke of him as having been in the nursery, "the honestest, truest, most goodnatured child

that ever lived."—*Lady Hervey's Letters*. This is a singular instance of a child in which a mother, and a prince in which a courtier, could discover no promise of brilliancy.

† In these the princess and earl are represented as enclosed together in a boot, or seated together on a bank, while Scotch pipers are playing, "Thro' the Wood Laddie."

but now, when his patron became a king, the earl, who was laughed at as the prince's friend, succeeded to adulation and hatred as the king's favourite. Two days after his accession, George III. held a council at St. James's, when his eldest brother, the Duke of York, and the Earl of Bute were sworn in as members.

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The writers upon this reign, reasoning from the event, attribute this act of George to a well-matured resolution to overthrow the Whig phalanx, which had become no longer useful to guard the throne against the Jacobites, and was highly inconvenient to a king who wished to exercise at his own pleasure the prerogative of his crown. But such a design appears too deep to have been conceived by the young king; and surely the simple act of exalting a favourite does not require to be explained by the supposition of a hidden motive. The Earl of Bute was a Scotchman, unconnected either by blood or intimate friendship with the influential nobility of England; his manners were cold, methodical, and pedantic; he possessed neither influence to guide nor eloquence to command in either house of parliament: he was unversed in the forms of office, and was a Tory in his ideas of government. Such a man introduced among the Whigs, and supported by the power of the king, could not fail to create confusion; the spirit of Pitt, which chafed at the opposition of a king, would never tolerate the dominion of a favourite; and

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Newcastle, although awed and overthrown by his great subduer, would feel all his jealousy revive against an inferior rival.

The struggle did not, however, immediately commence: for some months all was popularity and equanimity. The king's proclamations against vice and immorality were pleasing to those of the sober part of the community who confided in their efficacy; and the security of the entire independence of the judges called forth general acclamations. This latter trap for popularity, whether the invention of the king, or, as is far more probable, of the minister, was highly successful; it is still cited as an eminent instance of the disinterestedness and patriotism of the new monarch. The independence of our judges is certainly an element as necessary to our freedom as the air to our existence: but this had, for all practical purposes, been secured long before the birth of George III. The revolution had destroyed the power which the Stuarts had exercised over our courts, and William never thought of granting any other commissions than "*quamdiu se bene gesserint.*" The act of succession made this compulsory upon all sovereigns who should succeed, in consequence of its limitations, and provided that a judge could only be removed in compliance with an address from both houses of parliament. On the death of King William, however, it was decided by themselves that

their commissions determined upon a demise of the crown, and in the appointments two of the old judges were superseded. This was a rag of the old prerogative which had legalized the murders committed by Charles; but as it was a remnant of tyranny which could never be made to cover another act of despotism, it required no great self-denial in the sovereign to submit to its destruction.* It was in fact by no means dangerous, since it required only to be once exercised to be abolished.

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The influence of the Earl of Bute was soon apparent; a very few months had elapsed before Mr. Legge, the steady friend and able supporter of Pitt, was dismissed from his office of chancellor of the exchequer, on account, as the public voice affirmed, of his having, seven years before, refused to resign the representation of Hampshire to one of Lord Bute's relations.† Lord Holderness retired, in order to make room for the favourite. A large breach had already been made in the ministry: still, however, Pitt remained chief secre-

* Lord Hardwicke's speech upon the address. Parl. Hist. Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. i. See also the statute 13 Will. III., cap. 2. History of the Minority." If these letters are authentic, and they bear internal evidence of authenticity, they discover one of the most arrogant interpositions of power to

† See the whole correspondence, printed in a tract called "The be found since the revolution.

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tary—his eyes were too intently fixed upon the object for which he was contending to mark who were his comrades in the race. He had thoroughly humbled France, a feat which the Whigs had once before accomplished—he was now treating for peace; but in a manner very different from that which had been adopted by the negotiators of the peace of Utrecht. The negotiations had proceeded to some extent, and England appeared likely to be able to place among her archives one treaty bearing terms commensurate with her successes. But the diplomacy of France was not yet exhausted: the French agent now delivered a private memorial proposing that Spain should be invited to accede to the treaty, and specifying certain points demanded by that power. Pitt, enraged at the presumption of a crushed enemy in attempting to interfere between England and another nation, rejected the proposition with scorn; and, in reply to the modifications proposed by France, declared that he would not relax one syllable from his terms until the Tower of London was taken sword in hand. To Spain he made a requisition that that court should disavow the memorial of the French agent: this disavowal was refused, and the treaty, so well known as the family compact, was immediately concluded between the Bourbons of France and Spain. Pitt obtained almost immediate intelligence of its signature, and, of course,

knew that all further hope of peace with Spain was chimerical.

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This treaty was as much an act of hostility on the part of Spain as if the Spanish fleet had sailed up the Thames and attacked Tilbury Fort. Pitt resolved to chastise it as it deserved, and proposed to intercept her galleons, and thus strike at once a blow which should disable her for the contest. But the Earl of Bute had now acquired power in the council, and he thought this was a favourable opportunity for its exercise; he had often before opposed Pitt's propositions,* he now outvoted him. The golden opportunity was lost, Spain waited until her galleons were safe in harbour and then declared war.

The king supported the Earl of Bute; and Pitt, thwarted in his great design, and finding that his friends were being gradually removed, and that he was retained only that he might shield by his popularity the counsels of others, resigned. He thanked the ministers of the *late* king for their support; said he was himself called to the ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he considered himself as account-

* The public opinion was seen in the caricatures, which represented Pitt carrying the Earl of Bute upon his back, and sinking under the burden. There is a good collection of the caricatures of this time in the print-room of the British Museum, and they are not without use. At a period, when there was no artist of sufficient celebrity to be worth securing by either of the parties, these publications index the popular feeling.

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able for his conduct; and that he would no longer remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was no longer allowed to guide. Lord Granville, who was still president of the council, replied to this declaration. “I find the gentleman is determined to leave us; nor can I say I am sorry for it, since he would otherwise have certainly compelled us to leave him; but if he be resolved to assume the right of advising his majesty, and directing the operations of the war, to what purpose are we called to this council? When he talks of being responsible to the people, he talks the language of the house of commons, and forgets that at this board he is only responsible to the king.”*

What can be more conclusive, as evidence that the Tory spirit had gained an ascendancy in the cabinet, than the contrast between these two speeches. Pitt avows himself a minister created by, and dependent upon, the people; Granville boasts that he is responsible only to his king: the Whig is driven from the council—the Tory remains in power.

Pitt received, upon his retirement, a pension of £3000 a year for three lives, and a title for his lady. Had he been an affluent man, the reception of this pension might have been a valid cause of reproach; but when we know that he was destitute of patrimony, and

* Annual Register for 1761, p. 44. Many passages in Walpole's Letters, and in contemporary memoirs, establish the substantial correctness of the account given in the Annual Register.

compelled to regard his profession as a statesman as a source of pecuniary profit, we look at the national services he rendered, and admit at once that no man was ever more absolutely entitled to the wages of his labour than Pitt was to the recompence he now received. We do not wonder to find the hireling scribes of the rising favourite unable to draw a distinction between the bribe to prostitution and the recompence of honourable services; but we are unprepared to find Lord Chesterfield* so far misled by envy as to join in their cry, and catching at the contemptible opportunity afforded by his want of fortune, to asperse a man whom he could not hope to equal.

Earl Temple followed Pitt in his retirement; his office of privy seal was for some time vacant; but Pitt was immediately succeeded by the Tory Earl of Egremont. Many of the Whigs, who still remained in the cabinet, thought that the dismissal of Pitt had been in a great degree their work, and considered that it had been provoked by his assumption of too great authority. They soon, however, discovered their error. The Earl of Bute became as absolute as Pitt had been; invaded their departments, corrupted their secretaries, and established secret correspondences.† He acted on the principle that they were only responsible to the king, and he was the king's agent to declare his pleasure.

* Chesterfield's Characters.

† History of the Minority.

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In May, 1762, the Duke of Newcastle resigned ; and the favourite immediately became in appearance what he had long been in reality—prime minister. Still, however, many of the Whig families continued to support the administration: they could not even yet believe that it was determined to proscribe the whole Whig party; and it appeared to them almost unnatural to enter, as a party, into opposition to the government of a king of the house of Brunswick. The new premier soon terminated their doubts. Every Whig, who would not desert his principles, was removed, and their places filled with Tories, a knot of reformed Jacobites who had banded together under the name of the Cocoa-tree Club, and, when these failed, with unknown Scotchmen, who possessed an advantage over their colleagues, inasmuch as they had their principles and party yet to choose. The Duke of Devonshire was at last removed from all his employments in England which depended on the crown; and this attack upon a nobleman who was undistinguished by ambition or party violence, only to be accounted for by the circumstance of his being the representative of an illustrious Whig family, denoted the sweeping policy of the new premier.

The year 1762 forms an era in the history of the two factions, since it witnessed the destruction of that monopoly of honours and emoluments which the Whigs had held for forty-five years.

CHAPTER XXV.

Review of the conduct of the Whig party during the long period of their possession of the government.

It now becomes necessary to look back for a moment on the period over which we have travelled, and to review the conduct of the Whig faction during their long course of prosperity.

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Regarding only the state of the country as it stood among the nations of Europe, we must admit at once that their conduct has been unexceptionable. They found England indeed at peace, and they left her at war, but it was a peace which was neither honourable nor advantageous; it was a war which was glorious and triumphant—it was a peace for which a few ambitious men had bartered the laurels purchased with their country's blood—it was a war which had redeemed this dishonour, and placed France again at our feet. Hostility to that nation might almost be called an ingredient in the principle of Whiggism;

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favour towards it had always distinguished the Tories. The former looked upon its abasement as a sacrifice to the spirit of liberty; the latter raised it as an efficient and a grateful ally. In breaking the power of the patron of the Stuarts—the armed apostle of despotism, the Whig faction wrought good service for the cause it had espoused; by humbling a commercial rival, despoiling her of her colonies, and placing England in a situation to recover every advantage she had lost, it had conferred benefits still more appreciated because they were more obvious.

True, this had not been effected without some national sacrifice. The public debt, which, at the accession of George I., was fifty-four millions, was now grown to a hundred and forty-six millions, a sum which was certainly the cause of some real and more simulated alarm, but which appears trivial in comparison with the monstrous amount which we have since grown accustomed to contemplate with indifference.* But this debt was by no means the encumbrance which the Tory alarmists were accustomed to describe it. Limited, as it at this time was, to a sum, the annual interest upon which the nation paid with-

* In 1714 the public debt was £54,145,363, bearing an interest of £3,351,358. Upon the close of the war in 1762, it amounted to £146,683,844, bearing an interest of £4,840,821. The difference in the rates of interest shows how rapid was the improvement in the public credit. See the "History of the National Debt," and Sir John Sinclair's "History of the Revenue."

out an effort, it was, in fact, the strongest safeguard of liberty which the Whigs had yet established. The funds had become the receptacle for the savings of the middle classes, as well as for the wealth of the retired merchant. The mass of property thus invested depended upon the breath of the house of commons; any attack upon the privileges of that body would place it in jeopardy. What could be more advantageous to public liberty than a system which thus enlisted private interest in the cause of patriotism?

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At the close, therefore, of this long Whig administration, we find the nation increased in power, and still more increased in territorial possessions; cherished by her friends, feared by her enemies, and respected by all. Turn we now to the more immediate subject of our investigation—the internal state of the kingdom, and the progress of the Whig principle in our state government.

Here we are at first surprised to find that we have no grand and salient constitutional reforms to record. The Townshend administration employed itself first in exposing and punishing the designs of its Tory predecessors, and afterwards in preventing their effects. The necessity of defending what had already been obtained, forbad all pursuit after further acquisitions—nay, it compelled the Whigs even to recede from a portion of the ground already gained,

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in order that they might not be driven from the whole. Thus we find them sacrificing the Triennial act to a danger which threatened the existence of parliaments, doing, themselves, a friendly violence to the constitution, in order to preserve it from a deadly blow. That this violence exceeded the necessity has been already remarked. The frequency of general elections in more recent times, when the duration of a parliament does not certainly, upon an average, exceed three years, has long since answered the only general argument which was advanced in favour of the Septennial bill; and this frequency has diminished the practical importance of the question, which is only now to be looked upon with suspicion as an instrument by which a bold minister, with a corrupted parliament, may work incalculable evil before the nation could interpose to destroy his power.

The administrations of Stanhope and Sunderland made one step in progression. The true principle of toleration was now heard in the cabinet. The occasional Conformity and Schism acts, the last bonds which the Tories had placed upon the conscience, were struck away; the Test act was, to the astonishment of all high churchmen, denounced as unjust; and even Roman Catholics were proposed to be indulged with liberty and security for their religion. But the Whig leaders were far in advance of their followers. Even the middle classes were too ignorant

not to be intolerant: and when they observed the violent alarm of the clergy, they were not likely to infer that learning would alter their own conviction. The Whig leaders saw that the time was not yet ripe—they could not venture to provoke a cry of “the church is in danger”—the Test act was left unmolested, and the Catholics continued legitimate objects of persecution.

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The project of the Peerage bill will be a perpetual blot upon the memory of this administration; but it will not be forgotten that it was a Whig who defeated the attempt, and that, when its noxious tendency was exposed, the party deserted the leader by whom it had been originated. It was an indefensible design, conceived in the worst spirit of faction.

The administration of Walpole is, in point of time, the most prominent feature in this period of Whig rule; but the Journals of the houses of parliament afford no evidence during this period of the progress of popular government. *Quieta ne movete* was the great motive of conduct which Walpole adhered to himself, and inculcated to others. He trembled to excite the slightest dissension within the camp, while an enemy was threatening it from without. The designs of the pretender formed his ready objection to any proposal of a reform likely to be contested; and a wish to abet those designs was the charge with which he invariably met his opponents. To conso-

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validate the throne of the house of Brunswick was his first aim ; and he was eminently successful. John Locke, being asked by King William how long those revolutionary principles which had placed him on the throne would last, replied, “ Until this generation pass away, and the universities have time to breed a new one.” This danger Walpole saw had arrived ; it was his object to keep the country in repose ; to eradicate, either by force or conciliation, all the seeds of Jacobitism ; and to gather those tendrils of loyalty which had been torn away from the venerable trunk to which they had been wont to cling, and train them around the newly-planted stem of Brunswick.

To effect this purpose, he certainly did not hesitate to use corruption—a means of government which had never entered into the theory of our Whig constitution, nor was desirable to be known in its practice. But when Walpole assumed the direction of the state, the theory of a perfectly free constitution was impracticable in England. At that time, the people—and by this term I would be understood to mean, not the mere mob, but the whole of the middle class—the great mass of the community, as distinguished from the landed aristocracy—the people took little interest in the ordinary course of public affairs. If trade was injured or bread was scarce they murmured ; if any imminent danger threatened their liberties, they rose in indignation ; but when no urgent occasion called

forth their energy, they seldom came forward to oppose their superiors. Thus, in periods of tranquillity—and an ill-informed people had little foresight for distant dangers—the house of commons, if the influence of the landlords over the electors was left unopposed, would be an assembly of Tories. Walpole knew that such an assembly would restore the Stuarts ; and since it was vain to appeal to the electors to resist a danger they could not see ; he roused them from their torpor by a prospect of immediate interest, and had recourse to the means which the previously-existing corruption of the age rendered the most efficacious.

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Walpole, doubtless, thought only of present success ; but a statesman of more comprehensive views would probably have pursued the same course, not to perpetuate corruption, as the weapon of his party, but to use it as the surgeon often imitates by galvanism the functions of life to establish a real vitality. If the attention of the people could be once habitually fixed upon political affairs, they might be safely trusted to give them a direction which would destroy the supremacy of an agricultural aristocracy over a commercial people. The means—the temporary means were contrary to the principles of the Whig party, and, although not more base than the agrarian tyranny to which they were opposed, were base, and therefore indefensible : the effect was invaluable.

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The extent of corruption, established by Walpole, has, however, been much exaggerated;* the Tories regarded it as an invasion of their rights of property; for, although they had been accustomed to use it as an ally, they had never before met it as an enemy. They were careful to record every instance. Pulteney and his band of discontented Whigs, seized upon it as an efficient instrument of factious opposition; and Pitt and his little knot of patriots viewed it with real disgust, and exclaimed against it with indignant

* A very large portion of the secret service money which formed so large an item in the accusation against Walpole, was expended in gaining accurate intelligence of Jacobite intrigues, and in corrupting the agents of the pretender. Lord Orrery found among his father's papers a memorandum of the receipt of £2000.

Walpole was much abused by the

“*Sir Robert Walpole's Rewards.*”

“An English peerage *after* his services.

“Richmond park.

“The garter.

“Ample provision for his brother and immediate dependants.

“There was some little difference in the brothers; Sir Robert's brother having been employed in public service from his earliest years;

Tories for having, during his long administration, enriched himself and his relatives. So far as a *tu quoque* can be an answer to the accusation, it may be given in an extract from “*The History of the Minority*” (p. 134), contrasting the rewards received by Walpole with those bestowed upon the Earl of Bute.

“*The Earl of Bute's Rewards.*”

“An English peerage *before* his services.

“Richmond park.

“The garter.

“Ample provision for his brother and immediate dependants.

and Lord Bute's brother having been wholly unknown until within very few years past.”

violence. The two first of these sections, however, showed by their after-conduct that they felt nothing of the horror they expressed; and Pitt, who was really in earnest, afterwards declared by a public eulogium upon Walpole, that he was mistaken in the opinion he had formed of his conduct, and regretted that he had so pertinaciously opposed him.*

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The cautious and timorous character of both the Pelhams prevented their originating or promoting any new application of the Whig principle to our institution. The wars in which the country was engaged, also, diverted attention from internal affairs. We find, however, in the Whigs of this administration one essential quality of their party—they never affected a scorn for popularity; they could never rely upon their majority in the commons if the voice of the people was unequivocally against them; they were careful of popular favour while they remained in office. When they could no longer retain it they retired.

The ministerial career of Pitt was, throughout, a triumph of Whiggism, and an evidence of its prevalence and power. He had started forwards far before those Whigs who looked upon the Duke of Newcastle as their leader; many of whom thought themselves Whigs only because they were not Jacobites. Yet, without their aid, scarcely connected with the aristocracy,

* Glover's Memoirs.

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destitute of parliamentary influence, and hated by the king; supported only by his popularity, he stormed the cabinet, and kept it until those who had looked upon him so coldly were glad to avail themselves of his good fortune, and enlist under his leadership. War too completely monopolized the attention of this minister, to allow him to give much attention to domestic reforms.

We find, therefore, upon a review of this long period of Whig rule no legislative enactment bearing the character of a sacrifice to democracy. We find, also, that many of those reforms which the Whig principles approved and many of the Whig leaders had attempted, remained unaccomplished. Stanhope had wished to emancipate the Catholics from their thralldom. Walpole thought the Test act unjust. Yet the penal laws against the Catholics, and the disabilities of the Dissenters, remained. But the reason of this stationary policy has also been assigned. The constitution, as it then existed, had not grown by slow degrees, and strengthened as it grew; it had been established by a revolution from which the country had not yet recovered. The tree of liberty had been but lately planted; it was the duty of its guardians not to force it into a premature blossom, but to shield it from the wind, until its roots had struck deep into the earth, and it could defy the storm.

If we turn from our quest for theoretical experiments in favour of popular government, we shall, however, find abundant fruits of the spirit of liberty which, during this period, directed our councils. We shall find commerce, which breathes only the atmosphere of liberty, starting suddenly into life and health, and flourishing to a degree which England had not before witnessed. We shall find the people generally contented and happy; and if we inquire the era when the labourer received the largest amount of remuneration for his labour, we shall find it under these Whig administrations.*

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“In this period,” says our contemporary historian, “the seeds of our commercial greatness were gradually ripened. It was evidently the most prosperous season that England had ever experienced; and the progression though slow, being uniform, the

* Mr. Malthus, in a review of the quantity of subsistence which the labourer's wages have commanded in different ages, awards the preference to the period between 1720 and 1755.—“The average price of wheat for the first twenty years of the century (the 18th), was rather less than 2*l.*, and if the wages of labour were only 10*d.* or 10½*d.* the labourer would earn considerably less than three-fourths of a peck. If the wages were 1*s.* he would earn four-fifths of a peck.—From 1720 to 1755 corn fell, and continued low while the wages of labour seem to have been about 1*s.* During these thirty-five years the price of wheat was about 33*s.* the quarter, or a little above 1*s.* the peck; and the labourer, therefore, on an average of thirty-five years together would be able to earn about a peck of wheat.—From this time, corn began gradually to rise, while wages do not appear to have risen in the same proportion.”—*Malthus's Principles of Political Economy*, p. 279.

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reign perhaps of George II. might not disadvantageously be compared for the real happiness of the community with that more brilliant, but uncertain and oscillatory condition which has ensued.”*

Religious toleration, although not honestly avowed, was, in a great degree, acted upon; the influence of government was uniformly in its favour. Walpole saw, by the fate of his Quakers’ bill, how dangerous a subject this was for discussion; but he constantly opposed every proposition for severity, and fortified his own opinion by the authority of the queen. The Earl of Islay could never prevail upon him to allow him to put down the Jacobite meeting-houses in Edinburgh. He always replied, that the queen would not permit it.† This gentle, but continued current in their favour gave a moral force to right thoughts upon liberty of conscience which they did not before possess—it prepared the channel for a purer stream.

Under the government of the two first Georges education became somewhat more generally diffused; not that the universities sent forth more profound scholars than had before issued from their cloisters; for England has never been deficient in richly endowed institutions, which, by offering facilities for the higher orders of scholarship, enlisted the genius

* Constitutional History, vol. iii., p. 401. † Coxe.

of the middle classes in the cause of the aristocracy : but the total ignorance which precluded inquiry had been in a great measure dispelled, and now reigned only over the labouring population ; a mass which neither party had yet made any effort to awaken, and which, contented by their present state of comfort and in the enjoyment of high wages, cared little by which party or under what principles they were ruled. It is only want (a tolerably certain evidence of misgovernment) which makes the labourer a politician.

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The wider dissemination of the rudiments of learning of course produced a more extended taste for reading : the same influence which created satisfied the want.

During this period the liberty of the press was held sacred. Bolingbroke had been accustomed to silence a hostile pamphleteer by imprisoning his publisher, and Swift thought this method so fair and effective that it could not be too vigorously pursued. State warrants, newspaper taxes, and legislative projects, had been the arms which the Tories had been accustomed to add to the ordinary weapons of literary warfare. But Walpole would have none of these ; and, except in cases of gross personal libels, he was content to carry on the conflict with the pen ; even although he was thus compelled to match

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such unknown writers as Osborne and Walsingham* against the veteran powers of Atterbury, Swift, and Bolingbroke. Every paper of the Craftsman shows the extent to which the opposition writers calculated upon the minister's forbearance: and Walpole made it his honourable boast in the house of commons that he had never attempted to fetter the press. This unusual licence, although often embarrassing to the minister, was highly favourable to the dissemination of Whig doctrines. The Examiner had appealed chiefly to the aristocracy; the Craftsman was written, as its very name implies, for the people. In order to gain readers, therefore, it was obliged to inculcate the doctrines of the Whigs, or to disguise Toryism in a form which could answer but a temporary purpose.

Under these favouring circumstances the power of the press rapidly rose, and in 1738 a member complained in the house of commons, that "the stuff which the weekly newspapers were filled with was received with greater reverence than acts of parliament; and the sentiments of one of those scribblers had more weight *with the multitude* than the opinion of the best politician in the kingdom."† The quantity

* The writers of the London Journal and the True Briton. † Parl. Hist., vol. x., p. 448.

of political papers started to meet the demand for political knowledge, was so great that a person must have devoted his life to the task in order to read them all.* Magazines were therefore established, containing selections from the most popular papers on either side, and seasoning their contents with original essays, and a compendium of the news of the month. The Gentleman's Magazine, that invaluable repertory of facts, was established in 1731, and the London Magazine came forth in April of the following year. The extensive circulation of these, and similar periodicals, produced another and still more important step. Upon great questions, a member had occasionally committed his speech in parliament to the press, or, as was equally common, a political pamphlet had been written under that title. Occasional reports were also preserved in Boyer's Political State, and other similar works, which had no great circulation, and were rather placed in libraries of reference than read. Now, however, public curiosity was excited to know what passed within the walls of St. Stephen's; readers required from those who catered for their amusement continued reports of the proceedings in parliament. The newly-established magazines undertook to supply the requisition; and in August,

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1732, the London Magazine commenced a series of these reports, which were soon after copied by its elder rival.

This was a step of immense importance in our party and political history. The reports thus given may bear no similitude to the style of the orator, and may, therefore, be of little use to posterity; but they were of infinite value to contemporaries, since they, at least, made known to the constituencies the votes of their representatives, and accustomed the members to feel that the public eye was upon them. We now find them accusing each other of speaking to the galleries.

This popular innovation was but feebly opposed by the house. As it was, undoubtedly, a breach of one of their privileges they could not avoid to take notice of any complaint made by a member upon the subject; but these complaints were generally, although not always, occasioned by the abuse rather than the use of the practice; and the art of reporting being yet in its infancy the errors, even where accuracy was intended, were very numerous. It is a curious fact that in a debate upon this subject we find Pulteney alone objecting to the practice because, “to print or publish the speeches of gentlemen in that house, even though they might not be misrepresented, looked very like making them accountable without doors for what they said within.”

The violent democratic Whig was the only man in the house of commons who openly denied the responsibility of the representatives to those whom they represented.

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Walpole, upon this occasion, merely observed upon the general inaccuracy of these accounts, adding, "I have read some debates in which I have been made to speak the very reverse of what I meant to say." Wyndham, with the boldness of a man who felt he held his seat in parliament by the same title as he held his estates, declared that no gentleman, when his speech was fairly and accurately taken, ought to be ashamed that the world should know every word he spoke in that house. "For my own part," he added, "I never shall, for I hope never to act or speak in this house any thing that I shall be ashamed to own to all the world. But of late, sir, I have seen such monstrous mistakes in some gentlemen's speeches as they have been printed in our newspapers, that it is no wonder if gentlemen think it high time to have a stop put to such a practice."*

Thus we have testimony from all sides to the inaccuracy of the early reports. The resolutions of the house of commons, which were never intended to be rigorously enforced, did not tend to correct them. The reporters, in decent deference to the house, either disguised the names of the speakers by an anagram,

* Parl. Hist., vol. x., p. 800.

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or designated them by a Roman title, and as the house did not choose to penetrate this disguise they were released from all responsibility, and frequently gave the reins to their invention. In this they proceeded without interruption. Pelham met a complaint of their misrepresentations with the advice, "Let them alone, they make much better speeches for us than we can make ourselves;" and his counsel was followed. It is important to trace the origin of that practice of parliamentary reporting which has since arrived at such marvellous perfection, and has been productive of such momentous results; it marks the dawning of an age in which political power was no longer to be monopolized by a few of either faction.

The review we have taken of the period during which our councils were filled with Whigs has shown us a course of great national prosperity. But this was not wrought by the superior virtue, purity, or patriotism of the Whig leaders. There is no reason to suppose that the individuals of one party were superior to those of the other (we will except Pitt). But the ambition or avarice of the Whigs were restrained by the principle of their party. Many men who have little real piety assume its semblance, in order to conform to their particular sect, Whiggism imposes a similar obligation; and a man who enrols himself among that faction must at least speak and act as if he were a patriot.

APPENDIX A.

Mr. Shippen's Speech against the Septennial Bill.

Mr. Speaker,—I know my duty to this house, and the consequence of any unguarded expressions better than to say, that by any bills we have already passed, we have made so wide a gap in the constitution, that the force of the law is in a manner destroyed; or that, by any thing we have done, we have paved the way to a despotic and military government, the greatest calamity that can befall a freeborn people. Such reflections may come from persons without doors, who, though they may with justice complain when their liberties are invaded, yet cannot always enter into the depth and wisdom of our counsels, and are too apt to censure what they do not understand. No member can regularly arraign any bills the same session they have obtained the force and sanction of laws. But this bill, though it hath already got through the most difficult part of its passage, and though it will in all probability be the next law that shall be made, is yet unpassed, is yet before us for our consideration, and we have a right to treat it with freedom. Freedom of speech, I presume, will not only be allowed, but is expected on this occasion. I hope, therefore, as the business of this day hath raised an universal expectation throughout the kingdom, so gentlemen who are more able (none is more willing than myself) will appear with resolution and spirit in this im-

portant debate ; in this, perhaps, our last struggle for the liberties of those we represent.

I think, then, all the arguments which have been used for this bill are grounded on mere surmises and imaginations only ; are either trifling in themselves, or dangerous in their consequence. One main reason urged, both in the preamble of the bill, and in the debates of the gentlemen who are for it, is this : that the disaffections of the people are so great, and the enemies of the government both at home and abroad so watchful, that new elections will occasion new riots, rekindle the rebellion, and be destructive to the peace and security of the government, which will all be prevented by continuing this good parliament, and making the time of its dissolution uncertain.

If this argument be applied to the ministry, I can only answer, that it is no concern of ours whether they have rendered themselves odious to the people or not. They are more properly the object of our jealousy than of our care. They may be destroyed, and the government subsist. But if it be applied to his majesty, as it must be to make it any inducement to pass this bill, I will venture to say, that none of those, who are called enemies to the government and abettors of the rebellion, could have offered an argument so injurious to his majesty's honour. For with what face can any good subject insinuate, that in the infancy of his reign he hath deprived himself of the love and affection of a people who so lately received him with the utmost expressions of joy ? What an unjust idea must this give of his most mild and gracious government ? But the assertion is the more injurious because it is entirely groundless. For when these pretended disaffections were at the highest, it appeared how impotent they were, how far from being universal, by the easy and sudden suppression of the rebellion ; and by consequence how absolutely his majesty reigned in the hearts of his subjects. Now the rebellion is suppressed, if there should be any remains of those who are ill-disposed, the fate of their friends, whilst the terror of it is yet fresh in their minds, will restrain them from any future attempt. Besides, the hands of the government are strengthened. The Habeas Corpus act is not only now, but may be again suspended. You have a numerous

standing army distributed through the kingdom, to control and awe unruly spirits. But suppose the disaffections of the people to be as great, suppose the faction, spoken of in the preamble, to be as restless and designing as is affirmed, is this the way to extinguish animosities, to heal divisions, and to reconcile parties? No, sir, it will rather create discontents, where there are none already: it will rather give occasion to those that are disaffected to rail at your proceedings; to say, that your actions are such that you dare not venture on new elections: and who knows what such suggestions may produce! It is possible when the three years for which you are now chosen shall expire, they may insist that they are unrepresented in parliament; and this will be a better handle, a more plausible foundation for the faction to work upon, than they could have at the time of a regular election. Now, if the continuance of this parliament be intended only to calm men's minds, and that it is hoped this storm may by degrees subside, gentlemen will be pleased to consider that we are but a little above a year old, though we have done so many great and glorious things, and that there will be no necessity, as the law stands, of a dissolution this year and half; and that nobody can imagine discontents will last so long under so wise, so unerring, so pacific an administration, as we now enjoy.

Another reason insisted on is, that as the continuance of this parliament may prevent commotions at home, so it may hinder any invasion from abroad, by encouraging our ancient allies to enter into new treaties with us, which they will not otherwise do. This is a secret which, in my humble opinion, ought not to have been revealed; this is an argument highly improper to be urged in a British parliament, for it supposes that our allies prescribe to our counsels, and that they expect we should alter the present frame of our constitution before they will favour us with their friendships; which is a thought not to be endured in this place, where so many millions have been raised for their service, and must move the indignation of every Englishman, especially if it comes from any state that first received its being, and afterwards its protection, from England. I hope never to see this nation brought so low that the crown shall be directed, as was

once attempted, when to remove or keep its ministers, when to dissolve or continue its parliaments. Sir, his majesty, as king of Great Britain, is the arbiter of Europe, and may dictate to other nations. They will, for their own sakes, court his friendship; they have always found their account in being allies to the crown he wears. The British treasure and the British armies have made them triumph over their enemies, and establish the balance they wanted. It is further said, that by this bill you will restore the prerogative to part of its power, which is cramped by the Triennial act. Now, if this bill is to be understood to relate to alliances, it weakens and not strengthens the prerogative. For it is an insinuation that the people have something to do in making treaties, which must ever be denied by the friends of the crown, where the sole undisputed right is lodged by the constitution of this kingdom. Besides, if that was any consideration here, this argument is also a reflection on the present ministry, who are to have the honour to advise his majesty in any alliances he shall think fit to make; for it hath an appearance as if they durst not look a new parliament in the face; or, as if by some demerit or other, they should not continue in their posts, without the help of this bill, long enough to assist in supporting those alliances when made. It is true, we have had of late a sort of Triennial ministers, as well as parliaments. But we are to hope that the present set of ministers, who so far surpassed all their predecessors in wisdom and virtue, will behave so well as to deserve the continuance of his majesty's favour and the kingdom's approbation. Their friends ought, therefore, rather to reject than to enforce this argument, as reflecting on them, and groundless in itself.

There is another reason, drawn from the great and continued expenses occasioned by frequent elections, which is so weak that it scarce deserves to be taken notice of. For every gentleman is a judge of his own circumstances, whether he will or can be at the necessary expenses of an election: corrupt ones are not to be supposed, especially in this house, which, all the world knows, was chosen without the least corruption, without the least violence, without the least improper influence whatsoever.

As to what is said, that frequent parliaments are the cause of

obstructing justice, and hinder candidates from being impartial in the distribution of it, it is equally trifling with the reason last mentioned; and, if any, is an argument only for making parliaments perpetual. For he who will be a great deal biassed by his hopes of securing his seat in a Triennial parliament will, by the same principle, be a little warped by his expectation of sitting in a Septennial one; and he ought in neither case to be a member of this house; for nothing can effectually cure such a disposition; it will never be able to resist greater temptations and court preferments.

These are the chief arguments for passing this bill, and I humbly conceive they now appear to be of no great weight; but the reasons for letting the law stand as it does are such as, in my opinion, cannot receive an answer.

First, if there were not abundance of other arguments against this bill, the manner of its coming hither is a sufficient objection to it. It is sent from the lords, and as it chiefly relates to ourselves, I shall apprehend it inconsistent with our honour to receive it. We ought to imitate the spirit which our predecessors ever showed in resisting all attempts of this kind, all appearances of innovation by the lords. Our predecessors were so very jealous of their privileges that they never failed to exert themselves, even on the smallest and most minute occasions. Shall we then? shall this glorious house of commons be so far from doing that, as humbly to take a new model of our constitution from them? Surely we shall not sit tame, and acquiesce meanly, when they think fit to strike at the foundations of this house.

But if any here could be inclinable to receive the dictates of the lords, or to speak out the dictates of the ministry, I humbly apprehend it is not in our power to consent to this bill. For I cannot conceive by any rule of reason or law, that we, who are only representatives, can enlarge to our own advantage the authority delegated to us; or that, by virtue of that authority, we can destroy the fundamental rights of our constituents. I know, indeed, that the notion of the radical power of the people hath been extended to a degree of extravagance and absurdity which I would never be supposed to contend for. But it is self-evident that this power, with relation to the part we

bear in the legislature, is absolutely, is solely in the electors. You have no legislative capacity but what you derive from them. You were chosen under the Triennial act, and could only be chosen for three years, unless they could convey more to others than they had in themselves; unless they could give us a longer term to represent them than they could claim at the time of their choice to be represented. Our trust, therefore, is a Triennial trust; and if we endeavour to continue it beyond its legal duration, from that instant we cease to be the trustees of the people, and are our own electors; from that instant we act by an assumed power, and elect a new constitution. If we could dissolve or alter the form of any one part of the legislature, why not of the whole? And that is a doctrine I presume will not be advanced here; I am sure it will never be allowed in any other place. But I know it is a very unacceptable way of speaking, to dispute the power of those to whom one speaks; and it may be thought a presumption if I should affirm in this present parliament, which hath given so many proofs of its omnipotence, that even the whole legislature cannot do every thing. I must, however, always be of opinion that, though it is a received maxim in civil science, that the supreme legislature cannot be bound; yet an implied exception must be understood, viz., that it is restrained from subverting the foundations on which it stands; and that it ought not, on any pretence whatsoever, to touch or alter those laws which are so far admitted into the constitution as to become essential parts of it. I am also of opinion that we cannot pass this bill because it would be an infraction of the act of union, which I hear, almost every day, in this place called an irrepealable and fundamental law. But, since the representatives of North Britain are satisfied in that point, it would be highly impertinent in me to insist upon it.

But if nothing stood in your way, if it was never so much in your power, I think you ought not to repeal the Triennial act, except in the last extremity, and in the most imminent danger of the state. This law was one of the fruits of the revolution: this law restored the freedom and frequency of parliaments, so far as was consistent with the circumstances of that reign, which was involved in a war, and had occasion for constant and heavy

taxes: this law was a concession made to the people by King William, in the midst of his difficulties, and I own the policy of those ministers who shall advise his majesty to give his royal assent to the repealing of it, is of too refined and delicate a nature for my understanding. For, since his majesty has been pleased to propose that prince as a pattern to himself, and is pursuing his steps with so much glory, it will be a matter of astonishment to those who are not in the secret of affairs, to see, that in the reign of the one king every thing should be done to enlarge the liberties of the people, and to restrain his successors from being capable of relapsing into the errors and abuses of former princes; and that, in the reign of the other, there should be the least appearance of doing any thing which might but seem to stretch the prerogative, to invade and shock the rights and privileges of the subject, when both shall be found to rule by the same principles of liberty, and by the same maxims of government.

The Triennial act is grounded on the ancient usage and constitution of parliaments; as it is intended to oblige the crown to call them frequently. For, that parliaments were held frequently, half yearly, or annually at least, appears not only from the best accounts we have of the first institution of them, and by the two acts of Edward III., but by the writs of summons still extant, and several authentic instruments and records. However satisfactory it might be on any other occasion, I am sensible that a deduction of the history of ancient parliaments, as they were successively called, would be very tedious and unentertaining in this debate, and I will therefore only mention two records. One is that famous instrument of Edward I., concerning the *Annuus Census*, then claimed by the popes from the crown of England; wherein he takes notice that some arrears, incurred on that head, had not been raised, as they ought to have been, "*in Parlamento, quod circa Octavas Resurrectionis Dominicæ celebrari in Anglia consuevit:*" but he promises that he would recommend the payment of the money due, "*in alio Parlamento nostro, quod ad finem Sancti Michaelis proxime futuri intendimus, dante Domino, celebrare.*" The other record is a representation from the parliament to Richard II., some pas-

sages of which are these : “ Quod ex antiquo Statuto habent, et Consuetudine laudabili et approbata, cujus contrarietati dici non volebit.” That the king is to call “ Dominos et Proceres Regni atque Communes semel in Anno ad Parliamentum suum, tanquam ad summam Curiam totius Regni.” That if the king—“ a Parlamento suo se alienaverit sua sponte, non aliqua infirmitate aut aliqua alia de causa necessitatis, sed per immoderatum voluntatem proterve se subtraxerit per absentiam temporis Quadraginta Dierum, tanquam de vexatione Populi sui et gravibus expensis eorum non curans, ex tunc licitum omnibus et singulis eorum absque Domigenio Regis redire ad propria, et unicuique eorum in Patriam suam remeare.”

From the former of these records, it is obvious to observe that Edward I., who was one of our best princes, and so great a preserver of the laws of his kingdom, that he is justly called by the historians the English Justinian, chose, rather than to prolong the sitting of his parliament beyond their usual time, to dissolve one, though it had not finished its necessary business, and to summon another within the space of a few months. From the other it is very remarkable that Richard II., who is said to be one of the worst kings that ever sat on the throne of England, by absenting himself from the business of parliaments, and by that means continuing their sessions beyond their proper and accustomed time, drew upon himself a sharp remonstrance from both houses, and was at last for such practices, amongst other things, deposed.

Many reigns after this, Henry VIII. accomplished what Richard II. only attempted, and he continued his last parliament *ad libitum* without reproof. But it is well known what exorbitant powers they vested him with; and God forbid we should have any resemblance of those times; for that parliament acted like slaves, and that king acted like a tyrant.

But if the Triennial law had not been grounded on the reasons of antiquity, and the original usage of parliaments, it was no more than a reasonable indulgence from the throne to the people, who had struggled for a revolution, on account of the abuses of parliaments, and the endeavours to render them insignificant. It is true that prince once denied his royal assent to

it; but afterwards he considered that it could be no diminution of his prerogative, no blemish to his regal powers, to retrieve the honour and dignity of parliaments, as they were his support, as they were the essential part of that constitution he came to save; and this he found he could only do by the frequent calling of them.

Besides, this law was not only a reasonable indulgence to the people, as hath been said, in that it gave them frequent opportunities of changing their members, when they did not approve their behaviour, and was of advantage to the public, in making them act with more than ordinary caution and circumspection; but it proved of great service to the crown: for by frequent parliaments the crown could only know the immediate sense of the nation, which is absolutely necessary for a prince to know on all emergencies. However inconvenient this law may now be thought to the crown, and however opposite to some projects and schemes an active ministry may have in view, I appeal to experienced members whether they think, or can imagine, that the crown could have got half the money it hath been supplied with since the revolution, but by new and fresh elections. Such grievous and perpetual taxes would never have been endured from a stale and continued parliament. There is no injury or dishonour therefore to the crown, to be obliged by a law to do what, in justice to the subject and convenience to itself, it ought to do without a law.

But if you had a power to repeal this law, and exercise that power, the people would be in a much worse condition than if it had never been granted to them. They would be bound up for ever in a legislative way, the only way effectually and irrecoverably to lose their liberties. They would by us, their representatives, condemn short and frequent parliaments, and establish long and pensioned ones, which is a new doctrine, and such as was never before advanced by the commons of Great Britain.

Surely there must be some secret cause, some latent reason for hurrying on this bill in so precipitate a manner. The true reason, I believe, is not declared; and for my part I cannot but

suspect that the ministry have something to do which they apprehend will not be acceptable to a new parliament, and which will not stand the test of the nation. I say it must be something they have to do; for I am confident they do not self-condemn themselves for what they have already done. They have no remorse of conscience for apprehending so many hundred gentlemen, and confining them in prison so many months without examination. For such confinements were not only necessary to suppress the rebellion, but we have been told were intended as a favour and kindness to the persons who were so confined. It must therefore be some new work they have upon their hands; what that work is I will not presume to guess. But I will presume to say what it cannot be. It cannot be a design to abolish the limitations of the act of Settlement, with relation to foreigners, because that is no less than an open violation of our new Magna Charta, and an entire infraction of our original contract, as the government now stands.

I fear I have quite wearied your patience, but the importance of the subject will in some measure excuse me, and I have but a very few words now to add. I hope you will reject and not commit this bill; for there is nothing more certain than, that it will be to your dishonour and disservice to pass it, if we may reason of what will be by what hath been. Long parliaments then will naturally grow either formidable or contemptible.

We have an instance of the one in the long parliament of King Charles I., which to its eternal infamy overturned the best constitution in the world, the church and monarchy of this nation. We have a proof of the other in the long parliament of King Charles II. I ask pardon if I am heard by any that were members of it, but I only repeat what others have said. There was a famous simile applied by (Julian) Johnson to that parliament, which I the rather mention, because it was much applauded by the patrons of liberty and lovers of parliaments; and because I know the author is esteemed above his deserts by some gentlemen, who are now debating for long parliaments: it is this, "that a standing parliament will always stagnate, and

be like a country pond, which is overgrown with ducks' meat." I make no application ; no man will, or can, with any colour of truth or reason, apply it to this parliament. This parliament is so far from being a stagnating pool, that it might rather be compared to a rapid stream, or an irresistible torrent, which, if continued, will bear down all before it.

APPENDIX B.

Mr. Walpole's Speech against the Peerage Bill.

This speech was reckoned by his contemporaries as one of Walpole's best efforts; and the report has the rare merit of being authenticated by memorandums in the speaker's own handwriting, and by Mr. Onslow's remarks.

Among the Romans, the wisest people upon earth, the Temple of Fame was placed behind the Temple of Virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the Temple of Fame, but through that of Virtue. But if this bill is passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour, but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family; a policy very different from that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation,

“ Patere honoris scirent ut cuncti viam.”

It is very far from my thoughts to depreciate the advantages, or detract from the respect due to illustrious birth; for though the philosopher may say with the poet,

“ Et genus et proavos, et quæ non facimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco ;”

yet the claim derived from that advantage, though fortuitous, is so generally and so justly conceded; that every endeavour to

subvert the principle, would merit contempt and abhorrence. But though illustrious birth forms one undisputed title to pre-eminence, and superior consideration, yet surely it ought not to be the only one. The origin of high titles was derived from the will of the sovereign to reward signal services, or conspicuous merit, by a recompence which, surviving to posterity, should display in all ages the virtues of the receiver, and the gratitude of the donor. Is merit, then, so rarely discernible, or is gratitude so small a virtue in our days, that the one must be supposed to be its own reward, and the other limited to a barren display of impotent good-will? Had this bill originated with some noble peer of distinguished ancestry, it would have excited less surprise; a desire to exclude others from a participation of honours, is no novelty in persons of that class: "*Quod ex aliorum meritis sibi arrogant, id mihi ex meis ascribi nolunt.*"

But it is matter of just surprise, that a bill of this nature should either have been projected, or at least promoted by a gentleman, who was, not long ago, seated amongst us, and who, having got into the house of peers, is now desirous to shut the door after him.

When great alterations in the constitution are to be made, the experiment should be tried for a short time before the proposed change is finally carried into execution, lest it should produce evil instead of good; but in this case, when the bill is once sanctioned by parliament, there can be no future hopes of redress, because the upper house will always oppose the repeal of an act, which has so considerably increased their power. The great unanimity with which this bill has passed the lords, ought to inspire some jealousy in the commons; for it must be obvious, that whatever the lords gain, must be acquired at the loss of the commons, and the diminution of the regal prerogative; and that in all disputes between the lords and commons; when the house of lords is immutable, the commons must, sooner or later, be obliged to recede.

The view of the ministry in framing this bill, is plainly nothing but to secure their power in the house of lords. The principal argument on which the necessity of it is founded, is

drawn from the mischief occasioned by the creation of twelve peers, during the reign of queen Anne, for the purpose of carrying an infamous peace through the house of lords; that was only a temporary measure, whereas, the mischief to be occasioned by this bill, will be perpetual. It creates 31 peers by authority of parliament: so extraordinary a step cannot be supposed to be taken without some sinister design in future. The ministry want no additional strength in the house of lords, for conducting the common affairs of government, as is sufficiently proved by the unanimity with which they have carried through this bill. If, therefore, they think it necessary to acquire additional strength, it must be done with views and intentions more extravagant and hostile to the constitution, than any which have yet been attempted. The bill itself is of a most insidious and artful nature. The immediate creation of nine Scotch peers, and the reservation of six English peers for a necessary occasion, is of double use; to be ready for the house of lords if wanted, and to engage three times the number in the house of commons by hopes and promises.

To sanction this attempt, the king is induced to affect to wave some part of his prerogative; but this is merely an ostensible renunciation, unfounded in fact or reason. I am desirous to treat of all points relating to the private affairs of his majesty, with the utmost tenderness and caution, but I should wish to ask the house, and I think I can anticipate the answer, has any such question been upon the tapis, as no man would forgive the authors, that should put them under the necessity of voting against either side? Are there any misfortunes, which every honest man secretly laments and bewails, and would think the last of mischiefs, should they ever become the subject of public and parliamentary conversations? Cannot numbers that hear me testify, from the solicitations and whispers they have met with, that there are men ready and determined to attempt these things if they had a prospect of success? If they have thought, but I hope they are mistaken in their opinion of the house, that the chief obstacle would arise in the house of lords, where they have always been tender upon personal points, especially to any of their own body, does not this project enable them to

carry any question through the house of lords? Must not the twenty-five Scotch peers accept, upon any terms, or be for ever excluded? Or will not twenty-five be found in all Scotland that will? How great will the temptation be likewise to six English, to fill the present vacancies? And shall we then, with our eyes open, take this step, which I cannot but look upon as the beginning of woe and confusion; and shall we, under these apprehensions, break through the union, and shut up the door of honour? It certainly will have that effect; nay, the very argument advanced in its support, that it will add weight to the commons, by keeping the rich men there, admits that it will be an exclusion.

But we are told that his majesty has voluntarily consented to this limitation of his prerogative. It may be true; but may not the king have been deceived? which, if it is ever to be supposed, must be admitted in this case. It is incontrovertible, that kings have been overruled by the importunity of their ministers to remove, or to take into administration, persons who are disagreeable to them. The character of the king furnishes us also with a strong proof that he has been deceived; for although it is a fact, that in Hanover, where he possesses absolute power, he never tyrannised over his subjects, or despotically exercised his authority, yet, can one instance be produced when he ever gave up a prerogative?

If the constitution is to be amended in the house of lords, the greatest abuses ought to be first corrected. But what is the abuse, against which this bill so vehemently inveighs, and which it is intended to correct? The abuse of the prerogative in creating an occasional number of peers, is a prejudice only to the lords, it can rarely be a prejudice to the commons, but must generally be exercised in their favour; and should it be argued, that in case of a difference between the two houses, the king may exercise that branch of his prerogative, with a view to force the commons to recede, we may reply, that upon a difference with the commons, the king possesses his negative, and the exercise of that negative would be less culpable than making peers to screen himself.

But the strongest argument against the bill is, that it will

not only be a discouragement to virtue and merit, but would endanger our excellent constitution; for as there is a due balance between the three branches of the legislature, it will destroy that balance, and consequently subvert the whole constitution, by causing one of the three powers which are now dependent on each other, to preponderate in the scale. The crown is dependent upon the commons by the power of granting money; the commons are dependent on the crown by the power of dissolution; the lords will now be made independent of both.

The sixteen elective Scotch peers already admit themselves to be a dead court weight, yet the same sixteen are now to be made hereditary, and nine added to their number. These twenty-five, under the influence of corrupt ministers, may find their account in betraying their trust; the majority of the lords may also find their account in supporting such ministers; but the commons, and the commons only, must suffer for all, and be deprived of every advantage. If the proposed measure destroys two negatives in the crown, it gives a negative to these twenty-five united, and confers a power, superior to that of the king himself, on the head of a clan, who will have the power of recommending many. The Scotch commoners can have no other view in supporting this measure, but the expected aggrandizement of their own chiefs. It will dissolve the allegiance of the Scotch peers who are not amongst the twenty-five, and who can never hope for the benefit of an election to be peers of parliament, and almost enact obedience from the sovereign to the betrayers of the constitution.

The present view of the bill is dangerous; the view to posterity, personal and unpardonable; it will make the lords masters of the king, according to their own confession, when they admit that a change of administration renders a new creation of peers necessary; for by precluding the king from making peers in future, it at the same time precludes him from changing the present administration, who will naturally fill the vacancies with their own creatures; and the new peers will adhere to the first minister, with the same zeal and unanimity as those created by Oxford adhered to him.

If, when the parliament was made septennial, the power of dissolving it before the end of seven years had been wrested from the crown, would not such an alteration have added immense authority to the commons? And yet, the prerogative of the crown in dissolving parliaments, may be, and has been oftener abused, than the power of creating peers.

But it may be observed, that the king, for his own sake, will rarely make a great number of peers; for they, being usually created by the influence of the first minister, soon become, upon a change of administration, a weight against the crown; and had queen Anne lived, the truth of this observation would have been verified in the case of most of the twelve peers made by Oxford. Let me ask, however, is the abuse of any prerogative a sufficient reason for totally annihilating that prerogative? Under that consideration, the power of dissolving parliaments ought to be taken away, because that power has been more exercised and more abused, than any of the other prerogatives; yet, in 1641, when the king had assented to a law that disabled him from proroguing or dissolving parliament, without the consent of both houses, he was from that time under subjection to the parliament, and from thence followed all the subsequent mischiefs, and his own destruction. It may also be asked, whether the prerogative of making peace and war has never been abused? I might here call to your recollection the peace of Utrecht, and the present war with Spain. Yet who will presume to advise that the power of making war and peace should be taken from the crown?

How can the lords expect the commons to give their concurrence to a bill, by which they and their posterity are to be forever excluded from the peerage? How would they themselves receive a bill which should prevent a baron from being made a viscount, a viscount an earl, an earl a marquis, and a marquis a duke? Would they consent to limit the number of any rank of peerage? Certainly none; unless, perhaps, the dukes. If the pretence for this measure is, that it will tend to secure the freedom of parliament, I say that there are many other steps more important and less equivocal, such as the discontinuance of bribes and pensions.

That this bill will secure the liberty of parliament, I totally deny; it will secure a great preponderance to the peers; it will form them into a compact impenetrable phalanx, by giving them the power to exclude, in all cases of extinction and creation, all such persons from their body who may be obnoxious to them. In the instances we have seen of their judgment in some late cases, sufficient marks of partiality may be found to put us on our guard against the committing to them the power they would derive from this bill, of judging the right of latent or dormant titles, when their verdict would be of such immense importance. If gentlemen will not be convinced by argument, at least, let them not shut their ears to the dreadful example of former times; let them recollect that the overweening disposition of the great barons to aggrandize their own dignity, occasioned them to exclude the lesser barons, and to that circumstance may be fairly attributed the sanguinary wars which so long desolated the country.

APPENDIX C.

Sir John Barnard's Speech against the Excise Bill.

Sir,—I find that the honourable gentleman who opened this scheme to the committee (Sir R. Walpole), and the learned gentleman who spoke since (Sir Philip Yorke), make great complaints of some people's having grossly and maliciously misrepresented their scheme, before those malicious persons knew what it was. For my part, I happen to be of a very different way of thinking; for though I am far from thinking that the scheme, as now opened to us, is the very same with what it was when first formed; yet, even as it is now opened, it is such a scheme, in my opinion, as cannot even by malice itself, be represented to be worse than it really is.

Now that I know it; now that I see what it is, it appears to me to be a scheme that will be attended with all those bad consequences, that ever were apprehended from it before it was known; and I plainly foresee, that it will produce none of those good effects, which gentlemen have been pleased to entertain us with the hopes of: they have, indeed, gilded the pill a little, but the composition within is still the same; and if the people of England be obliged to swallow it, they will find it as bitter a pill as ever was swallowed by them since they were a people.

The learned gentleman was pleased to say that he was of opinion, that the opposition to this wicked scheme, for so I must call it, proceeded from other motives than gentlemen are willing to own. I do not know what motives he can mean: but I am persuaded, that those gentlemen who propose this scheme, have some secret views, which it would neither be convenient or safe for them to own in this place; for as to any reasons or views,

which may be openly avowed for the proposing of this scheme, I know of none, but that of preventing the frauds that may be committed in that branch of the revenue now under our consideration: and that it will not answer that purpose, has been made plainly appear by my worthy brother near me (Mr. Perry); but granting that this scheme should answer such a purpose, if the laws now in being, duly executed, are sufficient to answer that purpose, what necessity is there for applying this new, this desperate remedy, a remedy which is certainly much worse than the disease? But before I proceed any further, I shall desire that the commissioners of the customs, who are attending at the door, may be called in.

[The commissioners were accordingly called in, and being asked by Sir John Barnard, What they thought the value of the frauds committed in the tobacco trade might amount to one year with another? Their answer was, That they had never made any computation: but one of them said, that by a computation he had made only to satisfy his own private curiosity, he believed the frauds come to their knowledge might amount to 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.* per annum, one year with another. Then Sir John Barnard asked them whether it was their opinion, that if the officers of the customs performed their duty diligently and faithfully, it would not effectually prevent all, or most of the frauds that could be committed in the tobacco trade? To which they answered, that it was their opinion it would. Then he asked them further, whether it was their opinion, that if the commissioners of the customs had the same power over their officers, as the commissioners of the excise have over theirs, it would not contribute a great deal towards making them more faithful in the discharge of their duty than they now are? To this their answer was, that they believed it would. After this, the commissioners being withdrawn, Sir John Barnard proceeded thus:]

Sir, I now leave it to every gentleman in this house to consider, what real pretence can be formed for introducing such a dangerous scheme, as what has been proposed to us; the only pretence I have yet heard made use of is, the preventing of frauds, by which, say they, the fair trader will be encouraged, and the revenue increased: but now you see, that is the opinion, even of

the commissioners of customs, that, by a due execution of the laws now in being, all or most of those frauds may be effectually prevented : and I am sure, if they can be prevented by the laws in being, the preventing of them by that method will contribute much more to the increase of the public revenue, and to the encouragement of the fair trader, than the preventing of them by means of the dangerous scheme now proposed to us. I now leave it to the whole world to judge, who are they that have secret motives which they are not willing to own ; which they dare not own ; Whether it be those who are the proposers and promoters of this scheme, or those who are the opposers of it ?

The learned gentleman seemed to be surprised how our constitution, or the liberties of the country came to be brought into the present debate : he said, “ he thought they had no manner of concern in the present question.” I am sorry to differ from a gentleman who, by his profession, ought, who certainly does understand the nature of our constitution, as well as any man in England ; but I am of opinion, that the constitution of our government, and the liberty of the subject, was never more nearly or more immediately concerned in any question, than they are in the present ; they are both so deeply concerned, that their preservation or their total overthrow depends entirely upon the success of the scheme now under our consideration : if the scheme succeeds they must tumble of course ; if the scheme is defeated, they may be preserved : I hope they will be preserved till time shall be no more. But I must say, that the learned gentleman, and every gentleman who appears as an advocate for the scheme now proposed to us, is much in the right to keep, if they can, the constitution and the liberties of their country out of the debate ; it is from thence that the principal arguments are to be formed against their scheme ; it is from thence that such arguments may be formed against it, as must appear unanswerable to every man who has a regard for either.

The gentleman tells us, “ That there are but 120 or 150 excise officers, besides warehouse keepers, to be added by the scheme now before us ;” and this additional number they seem to make a ridicule of ; but considering the swarms of tax-gatherers we have already established, this small number, as they call it,

is no trivial matter; and I would be glad to know from those gentlemen, what they call warehouse keepers, and what number of them may be necessary? I hope they will allow, that a warehouse keeper appointed by the treasury, and paid by the treasury, is an officer of the revenue, as much as any other officer whatsoever; and if the number that there must be of these be added to the other, I believe we may find that the number of revenue officers to be added by this scheme must be very considerable.

As for the new method of appeal proposed, I can see no advantage that it will be of to any unfortunate man that may have occasion for it: in all cases, the charge and trouble of attending must be very great, and the event very precarious; but in most cases, where poor retailers may have occasion to be concerned, the charge and trouble of attendance must be greater than the subject can bear, so that all such people must succumb; they must submit to the determination of the commissioners of the excise, and can expect no other redress, but what they meet with from the mercy of those commissioners. The judges of Westminster Hall are, it is true, for life, but they are all named by the crown; I shall say nothing of the present judges, who so worthily fill the several benches of Westminster Hall; but if they should die, and if the crown should be resolved to use that power, which the parliament had put into their hands, in order to oppress the subject, they will always find judges fit for their purpose: judges are but men, they are subject to the same frailties that other men are, and the crown has always plenty of baits wherewithal to tempt them. A judge may be made a lord chief justice, a lord chief justice may be made a lord chancellor, and every one may have a son, a brother, or a cousin to be provided for; and the crown has many other ways, by which they may win over a judge to administer justice according to the directions he shall receive from court; more especially when he is to administer justice in a summary way, and without the usual forms of proceeding in courts of law equity. For by this new method of appeal, and which has been so much bragged of, care has been taken that the subject shall not be restored to his ancient birthright, that is, to a trial by jury.

No, this I find is most carefully avoided, and yet I think it must be allowed, that it is the inherent right of every Englishman to be tried by his peers ; I am not so much acquainted with law, as to give an account of the several cases in which this method of trial has been set aside, or the reasons for so doing ; but I will venture to say, that wherever that method has been set aside, whether the same was done by the wisdom of the nation or otherwise, such an alteration was an innovation, and was a dangerous encroachment upon the original charter of our constitution.

As to the pretended partiality of juries, so much complained of by the learned gentleman, it is of no weight with me ; I cannot see how that honourable gentleman, or any gentleman, can pretend to know what reasons a jury may have for giving their verdict ; no gentleman has a right to be believed upon his single say-so, against a verdict given by twelve honest men upon oath. If there have been so many verdicts given against the crown, as that learned gentleman seems to insinuate, it is to me a strong proof that prosecutions have been set on foot against the subject, upon the evidence of witnesses, whose credibility or veracity have not been very much to be depended on ; which is so far from being an argument for altering the method of trial by jury, that it is a very strong argument for the continuance of that method in all time to come. But as it is now very late, and as I shall probably have another opportunity of giving my sentiments more fully upon the affair now before us, I shall trouble you no further at present, but only to declare, that now, after hearing this scheme opened to us, I dislike it as much as ever I did any representation of it that ever I heard of, and therefore shall give my negative to the question proposed.

APPENDIX D.

The Earl of Chesterfield's Speech against the Convention with Spain.

My Lords,—I very little mind the Address proposed, or any address that can be proposed upon this occasion: nor am I under the least concern, whether you amend it or no; for I shall be against it, however amended. I think this convention the most inglorious, the most pernicious that this nation ever made; and therefore I shall be against any thing that may seem to insinuate the approbation of this house. We are sworn to be faithful counsellors to his majesty, and I think it would be deceiving him, it would be a breach of our honour, a breach of our oath, to present to his majesty an Address that may bear the most distant resemblance of an approbation of such a treaty. I do not know who were the authors of it; and therefore I cannot condemn the convention because of the authors; be they who they will, because of the convention. But, my lords, though I do not know who were the authors, I know who were not: I know his majesty was not: I know he would never have approved of it, if matters had not been egregiously misrepresented to him. It is not, my lords, to the king, we are to show our respect by an address upon this occasion: it is to his ministers; for I must always look upon addresses that seem to insinuate an approbation of public measures, as addresses made to the ministers who advised and conducted those measures. It is not therefore to the king, but to his ministers, that we are to show our respect upon this occasion; and the only method by which

we can regain from foreign nations, that respect which is due to this, and that which we have forfeited by our late conduct, especially by our agreeing to this convention, would be to show no respect to those that made it, but to censure it, and then address his majesty, to know who had advised it. This would be showing a due respect to our sovereign, and a due respect to our own honour. As for our success, with regard to the solemn and definitive treaty, that is to be concluded in pursuance of this preliminary convention, I hope we shall have none; I would disappoint it if possible; for I am sure it is impossible to obtain an honourable treaty, in pursuance of such a dishonourable preliminary.

Last session of parliament, my lords, we strengthened the hands of the crown in a most extraordinary manner: we put it in the power of the crown to obtain satisfaction, reparation and security, by force of arms, if they could not be obtained by peaceable means; but no proper use has been made of the extraordinary powers we then granted. Great fleets have, indeed, been fitted out: the nation has been put to great expense, our seamen harassed, and our trade interrupted: from these mighty preparations the nation expected great things; but the Spaniards knew better: they knew the instructions given to our formidable squadrons; or at least they judged of them from former experience. They knew our fleets were directed by the same counsels they have been for several years past, and therefore they concluded, they were furnished with the same harmless instructions. We had before sent a fleet to Carthagena, where it lay peaceably for several months, an overmatch for Spain, but an unequal match for the worms and climate. We had before sent a fleet to Gibraltar, when it was actually besieged by the Spaniards; but that fleet was not to attack or annoy them: no, it was so civil as to open to right and left, and let provisions pass through for the enemy's besieging army: nay, it seems, they had instructions not even to protect our trade; for some of our merchant-ships were taken under their very nose.

Our fleets sent out last summer, my lords, now appear to have had the same sort of instructions. We may judge of the instructions given to that sent to the West Indies, from an acci-

dent that happened. One blunt English captain that was sent out upon a cruise, imagining that his country was not put to the expense of sending out fleets to do nothing, happened to meet with a Spanish register-ship, which he took and brought into Jamaica, as a lawful prize; but the commodore knew the secret: he knew we were not to take, but in the most humble manner to sue for satisfaction and justice; and therefore he ordered the captain not only to set his prize at liberty, but to convoy her back, with great respect, to the latitude in which he took her. Our squadron sent to the Mediterranean could have no warlike instructions; because they could do no harm to Spain, unless it had been to make prize of some of their fishing-boats, or coasting-barks: they had no land-forces on board, nor were provided with any thing proper for annoying any Spanish town or village upon the sea coast. None of our fleets therefore could give the least weight to our negotiations: they could serve for nothing, but to confirm the Spaniards in the contemptible opinion they have long entertained of us; and the consequence we find is agreeable. We have obtained no satisfaction for the many indignities that have been put upon us; it does not appear that we ever asked for it. We have obtained no reparation for our losses, but what was before agreed to by Spain, or what one part of our own people must make to the other. And we have obtained no security for our trade or navigation: that we have left entirely to our plenipotentiaries; and they are such plenipotentiaries, as, I believe, no nation in the world would have trusted with an affair of such consequence; for I do not know that either of them has one shilling's worth estate in any part of his majesty's dominions, to answer for any malversations or breaches of faith they may be guilty of.

I am surprised any lord should imagine, we have got as ample satisfaction as we could insist on. My lords, the word 'satisfaction' ought not to be mentioned by any one that talks in favour of this convention: we have got none. Has Spain agreed to punish or deliver up any one of its governors or captains, that have so cruelly used our seamen? This alone can be called satisfaction; and this we were afraid to ask. We have not so much as got, by this convention, any reparation for our

losses ; and yet we have by this convention given the Spaniards a general release. My lords, I shall show that we have got no reparation, but what Spain had before agreed to give, or what one part of our own people must make to the other ; and in order to do this, I must examine the just demands which, it is said, Spain had upon us. The only demands I ever heard of are, that which relates to the ships we took from them in the Mediterranean in 1718 ; and that which relates to the ship they call the Santa Theresa, which was seized at Dublin in 1735. If there are any other, I wish the noble lords who talk so much in favour of the convention, would mention and explain them.

Now, my lords, with regard to the ships we took from them in 1718, I must insist upon it, that they were justly taken, and were lawful prize. But as we, by the treaty of 1721, agreed to restore them, let us examine the words of that treaty, in order to see whether we have not long since complied, as far as we were obliged, with the terms of that treaty. The words of the 5th article of that treaty are, " That his Britannic majesty shall cause to be restored to his Catholic majesty, all the ships of the Spanish fleet which were taken by that of England, in the naval battle fought in the seas of Sicily in 1718, with the guns and other equipage, in the condition they are at present, or else the value of those that may have been sold, at the same price that the purchasers shall have given." These are the words of the treaty ; and in pursuance of this, his Catholic majesty sent commissioners to Port Mahon, where all these ships were, except one, for I never heard that any more of them were sold : and the ships were accordingly, by his majesty's orders, offered to be delivered to these commissioners, with their guns and other equipage, in the condition they were then in, which was all we were obliged to ; but the commissaries refused to accept of them, because they were in a decayed condition, and unfit for service. Therefore, if these ships were not restored, it was the king of Spain's own fault ; for we performed all that was incumbent upon us, by the treaty of 1721 ; except as to what related to the ship that had been sold, and that ship having been sent to Spain by those that purchased her, after they had fitted her up for service, at a very great expense, the Spaniards

thought fit to seize her, by which they gave us a claim upon them, instead of their having any upon us, on account of that ship; for we were obliged to account for her only at the price at which she was sold, whereas, when they seized her, she was worth a great deal more.

From hence it appears, my lords, that they could have no just demand upon us, on account of any obligations we laid ourselves under by the treaty of 1721. And with respect to the ship they called the Santa Theresa, it is well known, that she was one of those many British ships that have been of late most unjustly seized and confiscated by the Spaniards; and as she happened to be sent upon a voyage to Dublin by some Spanish merchants, the former owner being there at the time, immediately discovered her to be his ship; and he having applied to the government there, and fully proved his property, we could not refuse to do justice to our own people in our own ports; though we have for many years neglected to obtain justice for them from the Spaniards; but if we consider the convention, we shall find, that the value of this ship is not to be included in the 60,000*l.* demand, which they make upon us; for by the second separate article, this ship is to be referred to the plenipotentiaries, and if they should give it against us, the value of her is still to be accounted for, or to be allowed in whole, or in part, as a compensation for the British ship called the Success, the restitution of which is stipulated by the same article.

I hope I have now shown that the Spaniards had no just demands upon us; and therefore, I cannot comprehend how any lord can talk of the mutual demands that were between the two nations. My lords, there were no mutual demands: the demands were all of our side: we had taken great care they should have no demands upon us; for to our Christian patience and long suffering, we added a Christian sort of revenge. We heaped coals of fire upon their heads, by returning them many good offices for many injuries received; but whatever Christianity may teach with regard to private life, I am sure it inculcates no such doctrines with regard to the behaviour of nations or governments towards one another; and I have good reason to believe, that those who have been the chief authors of our

political tameness and submission, were no way influenced by any Christian motives.

I shall now, my lords, consider the demands we had upon Spain; and here I must observe, that the demands of our merchants for ships plundered or seized by the Spaniards, before our commissaries returned from Spain, which is three or four years since, amounted to above 400,000*l.* which sum was reckoned as the value of what was taken or plundered at prime cost; for if our merchants had valued it at what they might have sold the cargoes for at market, it would have amounted to above 500,000*l.* besides the damages they suffered by the interruption of their trade, raising the premiums upon insurance, and loss of ships, two of which we had an account of from the gentlemen that were examined at our bar, besides many others that were never heard of; some of which there is great reason to suspect were taken by Spanish Guarda Costas, and the ships, with every living soul on board, sent to the bottom of the sea, after those pirates had gutted them of all they thought fit for their purpose. Therefore, the amount of our real damages, and consequently our real demands upon Spain, at the time our commissaries left that kingdom, was at least 500,000*l.* sterling; and as the Spaniards have taken and plundered a great many of our ships since that time, our demands upon them for damages, without reckoning costs, must have amounted to a great deal above 500,000*l.* at the time we began to negotiate this convention; for if to this we should add our costs, I mean the extraordinary expense the nation has been put to by their obstinate refusal of justice, our demands upon them at that time, would amount, I believe, to at least a million sterling, without one shilling's worth of a just demand upon their side; and this whole demand we have, by this convention, released, for the sum of 27,000*l.* which is less than the King of Spain himself had allowed (before this convention was thought of) to be justly due to us, as I shall presently make appear.

My lords, the value put by our commissaries on the demands of our merchants, is what I have not the least regard to. They seem to have been Spanish, and not English commissaries. It is true they reduced the demands of our merchants to 200,000*l.*,

but they had not the least reason for what they did. One of them that was examined at our bar, could not give the least shadow of reason for making any reduction, and much less for making such an extraordinary reduction. From what he said, we may judge how they lumped things in favour of Spain. He told us, that for about twenty sloops, that even they allowed to have been unjustly seized, they lumped them at 100*l.* apiece, though every one knows, that no sloop, proper for sailing on seas where tornados, tempests, and hurricanes are frequent, can be built and fitted out for 100*l.* without reckoning the seamen's clothes, provisions, and other things that must be on board. From hence we may see, they were resolved to reduce the demands of their countrymen as low as possible. From whom they could have instructions for this, I cannot imagine: I am sure it was not from his majesty; and if they received such instructions from any of his ministers, they ought not to have complied with them: it was betraying his majesty, and sacrificing the interest of his people, to the selfish views of some of his ministers.

But even this sum of 200,000*l.* the court of Spain was resolved, it seems, not to make good; and as our ministers were, it seems, resolved to have a treaty at any rate, it became necessary for them to reduce this sum. For this purpose, we have allowed of a demand of 60,000*l.* which the Spaniards made upon us, though they had not, as I have shown, the least pretence for making such a demand. This reduced the 200,000*l.* to 140,000*l.* Well, but even this sum of 140,000*l.* the court of Spain refused to pay; therefore we allowed them to deduct 45,000*l.* for prompt payment. Whatever other lords may think, I must think, an allowance of near one third of the sum due, is a pretty extraordinary allowance for prompt payment; especially, when that which is called prompt payment, is only a promise to pay in four months. I have often, my lords, heard of an allowance made for prompt payment, when money is paid before it is due by law or custom; but I never heard that the creditor made an allowance for prompt payment when he gave his debtor four months forbearance: the allowance is then generally of the other side. This was the case between Spain and

us. The money was due, and immediately payable both by law and custom: therefore they should have made us an allowance for forbearance, instead of our making them an allowance for prompt payment. What necessity, what obligation, could we lie under to accept of assignments upon his Catholic majesty's revenues in New Spain? It would have been ridiculous to accept of any such; because we knew, by experience, they were good for nothing.

However, my lords, every pretence was to be admitted, that could be made, for diminishing the sum due to us from Spain: therefore this allowance for prompt payment was admitted of, and this reduced the 140,000*l.* to 95,000*l.* But still this sum was too large: the court of Spain would not so much as promise to pay even this sum: therefore, what our negotiators had already allowed, for what I know, prompted them to set up a most unjust claim of 68,000*l.* against our South Sea Company; and though the Spaniards are, by their own acknowledgment, indebted to our South Sea Company in a much larger sum, yet it was agreed, that this 68,000*l.* should be immediately paid by the company to the King of Spain; and this immediate payment was made the fundamental article of the convention; for the King of Spain's protestation or declaration, I must, and I am convinced the court of Spain will consider as a condition *sine qua non*; and our agreeing to accept of any treaty under such a condition is the more extraordinary, for that it was done by one who was the company's servant, and at that very time intrusted with the management of their affairs at that court.

We may now see, my lords, what reparation the King of Spain has, by this convention, agreed to make us. He has agreed to make a stipulated payment of 95,000*l.* to us in four months, provided our South Sea Company make an immediate present to him of 68,000*l.* so that he is to pay to us but 27,000*l.* out of his own pocket, which is a less sum than he had acknowledged to be due to us, before this convention was thought of; because, before this convention was thought of, he had acknowledged, that the five ships, mentioned in the 4th article, were unjustly seized, and had actually sent orders to New Spain for their restitution; and the value of these five ships will, I am sure, amount

to more than 27,000*l.* Nay, if in pursuance of these orders they have been restored, which, indeed, I believe, we have no reason to apprehend, I do not know but we may be brought 4 or 5,000*l.* in debt ; for by that article, the whole, or any part of them, that shall appear to have been restored, is to be repaid by us.

Let us now see, my lords, what reparation we have obtained by this convention. Our plundered merchants are, indeed, to have 155,000*l.* divided among them, the salaries, fees, and perquisites of those who are to make the division, being first deducted : and this they are to have as a full satisfaction for their damages, which amount to more than 500,000*l.* But how is this 155,000*l.* to be raised ? Why 60,000*l.* of it must be raised by a tax upon our own people, or by making a new encroachment upon our sinking fund ; 68,000*l.* another part of it, is to be raised by, or rather taken by violence from our own South Sea Company ; and the remaining 27,000*l.* is to be paid to us by the King of Spain, which is a less sum than he had acknowledged to be due to us, before this convention was thought of. I beg pardon, my lords, for detaining you so long upon this head ; but as this treaty seems to have been artfully calculated for palming a sham reparation upon the nation, I was obliged to examine it to the bottom, in order to detect the artifices that have been made use of for covering the deceit.

Now, my lords, with regard to our future security, we have been so negligent of it in this preliminary treaty, that we have not so much as obtained from the Spaniards a suspension of their wonted depredations. Where Spain is to be a gainer by a suspension, there it is expressly stipulated ; but where we are to be gainers, it is entirely neglected. We have promised to suspend all fortifications and improvements in Georgia and Carolina ; but Spain has not promised to suspend searching our ships, and confiscating them upon frivolous pretences. For this neglect, a learned lord has found out a most ingenious excuse : he has told us, that if we had stipulated any such suspension, it would have imported an acknowledgment of their right to search and confiscate. How this may be in law, I do not know ; but I do not think it agreeable to common sense. I cannot think,

that my exacting a promise from a man to suspend doing me an injury, is the least acknowledgment, that he has a right to do me an injury. But if a suspension could be any way understood to be an acknowledgment of their right to search and confiscate our ships, the allowing them to continue the practice, must be a more direct, and, I am sure, a more hurtful sort of acknowledgment. Therefore, I must look upon this neglect in the preliminary convention as a bad omen, with respect to the definitive treaty. The time, it is true, in which this definitive treaty is to be settled, is but eight months: they cannot, perhaps, do us any great injury in that time; but that term may be renewed, may be often renewed, I believe it will be renewed from time to time, as long as some people have any influence in our councils; for I do not believe it will ever be in their power to make the Spaniards give up any right they pretend to; and no British minister will ever dare to grant them, by a solemn treaty, a right to search British ships on the open seas, or a right to prescribe to his majesty's subjects what sort of goods they shall be allowed to carry in their ships from one part of his majesty's dominions to another. For this reason, I do not know, but that our negotiations for a definitive treaty may last as long as our negotiations for this preliminary have continued, which I must look on to be at least ten years; for these renewals or continuations may be safely agreed to, because they will not be much taken notice of, or resented by the people; and during that whole time, the Spaniards are to continue to exercise a most unjust encroachment upon us, while we must continue to suspend the natural right we have to fortify and improve our own dominions.

As for the pretence, my lords, that the Spaniards have given up their right to search or confiscate our ships, and have acknowledged themselves in the wrong, by agreeing to pay us damages and costs, I have already shown that they have not agreed, by this treaty, to pay us any damages, but what they had before acknowledged to be due; and I was surprised to hear a learned lord, who certainly understands what is meant by damages and costs, so far mistake the matter, as to say, the Spaniards have agreed to pay costs. Our costs are the expenses

the nation was put to in warlike preparations last summer, which the Spaniards have not agreed to pay one shilling of; for whether those preparations are to be called warlike measures or not, they certainly cost us a great deal of money; and in all nations but this, they look mighty like war: even in this, till within these twenty years, they have generally been the certain harbinger of war; and will be so again, as soon as we begin to have a regard to our character abroad. or our economy at home.

My lords, I have this day, and upon this occasion, heard a distinction made by a learned lord, between a right, and the enjoyment of a right. What the noble lord meant by this distinction, I cannot comprehend: for it is a distinction which, I confess, I do not understand. I am sure no right is good for any thing unless it be enjoyed, nor further than it is enjoyed; and I must think, that whilst a man prevents me enjoying my right, he, for that time at least, takes from me the right itself. But after the noble lord had made this incomprehensible distinction, I was amazed to hear him say, there is no matter of right now in dispute between Spain and us. Do not they say, they have a right to search our ships on the open seas? It does not signify to us what frivolous pretence they found that right upon: they do pretend to it, they have enjoyed it, by our tameness, for too many years. Do not they say, they have a right to seize and confiscate our ships, if they find any gold, silver, logwood, cocoa, or other goods on board, which they are pleased to call the produce of their settlements in America? It signifies nothing to us, what reason they give for setting up such a claim: they do pretend to it, and have actually exercised this right, even since this treaty was first set on foot; for they seized Captain Vaughan's ship on the 29th of June last, and have since condemned her, for no other reason, but because of her having some goods on board, which, they said, was the produce of their settlements, though it appeared that he had taken them in at Jamaica. These, my lords, are matters of right, which, I hope, our ministers dispute with them: I hope no British minister will ever dare to yield to them in either of these respects. And, on the other hand, do not we say, we have a right to a free navigation in the American seas? Do not the Spaniards deny

we have any such right? Do not they expressly say, we have no right to any navigation in those seas, but such as they have granted us by treaty? And that, they say is only to and from our own colonies, whilst our ships steer a direct course; which they, as sovereigns of the American seas, are to be the only judges of. This is the meaning they put on the 8th article of the treaty of 1670, which every man must be convinced of, that has read M. de la Quadra's letter to Mr. Keene, of the 10th of February was a twelvemonth: his words are, after having given an abstract of that article, "That these words plainly show the little grounds of the proposition you have advanced, that his Britannic majesty's subjects have a right to a free commerce and navigation in the West Indies, the only navigation that can be claimed by them, being that to their islands and plantations, whilst they steer a due course; and their ships are liable to seizure and confiscation, if it be proved that they have altered their route, without necessity, in order to draw near to the Spanish coasts." This, it is true, my lords, is a most false and ridiculous interpretation of that article; but this they have been prompted to insist on by our tameness, and by our puzzling the case with our negotiations.

From hence we must see, my lords, that there are rights of great importance in dispute between Spain and us. They pretend to rights which we can never admit of, as long as we possess a foot of ground, or have any trade in the West Indies; and they deny us a right that every free state in the world has a just title to by the laws of nature and nations; and I will venture to prophesy, that, without a war, they will never give up the former, nor acknowledge the latter. We may negotiate as long as we please: we may conclude sham treaties and conventions, as temporary expedients for amusing our own people; but, from our late conduct, they have conceived such a contemptible opinion of us, that we must now fight them before we can expect any justice or satisfaction from them. This must at last be the case; but when this happens, it will not be those who then advise a war, but those, who by their pusillanimous conduct have made it necessary, that ought to be blamed for having led the nation into a war. If we had properly resented

the first insult, and had peremptorily insisted upon full satisfaction, we might have obtained it by peaceable means; but now I am afraid it is become impossible: we must go to war before we can expect either satisfaction or quiet; and when we do, I hope it will be conducted with wisdom and vigour; for if we show the same irresolute conduct in war, we have lately done in peace, if we seem afraid of hurting the enemy too much, like a senseless and spiritless animal fallen into a mire, the longer we struggle, the deeper we shall sink, and may, at last, come to be suffocated in the mud: whereas, by a bold and vigorous push at first we might have got through the quagmire, and thrown ourselves safe upon the opposite shore.

Having now shown, that our right to a free navigation in the American seas, is one of those rights that is disputed by Spain, we must from thence conclude, it is one of those rights, that is by this convention to be regulated by plenipotentiaries. That is to say, my lords, it is to be given up by our plenipotentiaries; for if it be regulated, it must be destroyed: every regulation must be a restraint, and that which is put under a restraint, can in no sense be said to be free. The right Spain pretends to, of searching our ships in the open seas; and the right they pretend to, of prescribing to us what sort of goods we may carry in our ships, from one part of the British dominions to another, are rights which, I hope, are now in dispute between Spain and us; and are therefore rights that are referred to be regulated by our plenipotentiaries. My lords, if we agree to regulate them, we grant them; and if we grant them under any regulations, we can no longer pretend to a free navigation or commerce in the American seas: therefore, my lords, I must look upon this article as an artful, or indirect surrender (I shall not give it the name it deserves) of the most undoubted, and the most valuable rights of the people of Great Britain. The learned prelate who spoke some time ago, and the learned lord who spoke since, have, indeed, upon this subject, shown themselves excellent advocates for Spain: I hope the Spanish plenipotentiaries will neither have so much eloquence, nor so many arguments; for, if they have, as I have no very great opinion of the capacity or qualifications of our own, I am afraid we shall come

off with the worst. But their arguments in favour of Spain have been so fully answered by the noble duke that spoke after the reverend prelate, and the noble lord that spoke last but one, that I need not, if I could, add any thing to the answers they have made ; therefore, I shall only wish, that our plenipotentiaries had been here to have heard them, in order that they might have learned how to defend the cause of their country against the most artful arguments that can be made use of by its enemies.

The only other right now in dispute between Spain and us, that seems to have been taken the least notice of in our late negotiations, is our right to Georgia and Carolina. This, the noble lord who spoke last but two, has represented as a dispute about limits only ; though every one knows, the Spaniards have lately begun to dispute our right to Georgia, and even to a great part of Carolina, particularly our right to the former, which they so peremptorily deny, that they would not allow the name to be so much as mentioned in this convention ; and as we have lately given that country the name of Georgia, not only by charter, but by authority of parliament, our accepting of an article about the regulation of limits, without mentioning our frontier province, will, I am afraid, be considered by the Spaniards as a surrender of that province. We may, if we will, give up Georgia ; we may give up South Carolina, and yet say, that the only dispute between Spain and us was about limits ; because the Spaniards insisted, that the river Podie, upon the borders of North Carolina, was the proper limit between Florida and Carolina ; whereas we insisted, that the river Alatomaha was the proper limit. This, I say, might be called a dispute only about limits ; but, if we should give up all the country lying between these two rivers, if we do not give up a right, I will say, we give up a very valuable possession.

I have now shown, my lords, that by this convention we have obtained no reparation ; and that, so far from obtaining future security, we seem to have, in some measure, given up every thing, upon which our future security can be founded. What, then, could induce us to accept of such an unsatisfactory, such

a dishonourable preliminary? Which is a question that leads me of course to consider the present circumstances of Europe in general, and of this nation in particular. This, my lords, I confess, is a subject which I touch on with reluctance; because I am sure it can afford no great comfort, either to the speaker or to the hearer. The state of our affairs, both at home and abroad, I shall grant is dismal enough; but I am sorry to hear it made more dismal than it really is, for the sake of justifying an inglorious treaty, or a dastardly submission to the most provoking insults. The affairs of Europe are, indeed, at present, in a situation not very favourable for this kingdom; but what is this owing to? It is owing, my lords, to a ridiculous notion we took up about fifteen years ago, of the overgrown power of the house of Austria: a notion that could have been instilled into us by nothing but French counsels; and who were the chief propagators of this pernicious notion, we may well remember. This notion produced the treaty of Hanover; a treaty calculated for dissolving an alliance, which we ought to have cultivated and strengthened with all our art; because it could be prejudicial to no state in Europe but France alone. And this treaty of Hanover drove us into that long chain of negotiations, treaties, and expense, by which we not only reunited the two branches of the house of Bourbon, but contributed, at our own expense, to aggrandize them. Our fleets were employed to give principalities to one of the branches of that house; and now we are told, you must not vindicate your rights, or your honour, against one of these branches, because it may be assisted by the other.

My lords, if this argument proves any thing, it proves too much; if we dare not revenge the affronts that are put upon us, nor repel the most unjust encroachments, for fear of France, we have nothing to do but lie down and die. It signifies nothing to put it off by patchwork, and expedients, for eight months longer. But this, my lords, has been our method for several years. Like builders, that build a house to last only for the term of their lease, they build of rotten materials; and if they can, by patchwork, keep it up while they are in it, they do not

care if it tumbles upon, and crushes the landlord under its ruins. A minister that has no credit or character abroad, nor any authority or affection among the people at home, must have recourse to patchwork and expedients. He can have no materials, but the rotten hearts of sycophants and timeservers; and these must be kept together, at a great expense, by temporary expedients: he neither can, nor will, think of building a solid and lasting fabric; but, I hope the nation will never allow him to build for them; or if they should be so unwise, as to allow him to erect a deceitful fabric, that they will pull it about his ears, before he has time to enclose them; for if they should allow him to go on, he may so environ them with ruins, that it will hardly be possible for them to find their way out.

I cannot easily believe, my lords, that France will assist Spain in putting a yoke upon us, that may afterwards serve as a precedent for putting the same yoke upon themselves. The court of France is seldom so short in its politics. I am rather inclined to think, that the court of France will either endeavour to prevail on us to accept of sham treaties, and a precarious security, or, in case of a war, that they will endeavour to prevent our bringing it to a speedy issue, by a vigorous prosecution. I hope we shall take care not to be directed or duped by French counsels in either of these cases; for both will be destructive to this nation, both will serve the ends of France: a precarious peace, or a languid war, will keep up a contention between Spain and us; and such a contention will contribute greatly to establish the trade of France upon the ruins of the trade of this nation. But suppose these two nations should unite against us, and that we have negotiated ourselves out of every alliance that can give us any assistance; yet still we must do the best we can. By a wise and vigorous conduct we might make both of them repent of their undertaking. They both depend greatly upon their trade and territories in the West Indies, where we may be masters if we will; and though they have both of late got great additions of power by our blunders, yet they must not pretend to prescribe to all the powers of Europe. Such an attempt would bring back to us those allies, whom we have de-

tached by our late conduct; and in that case, a confederacy might soon be formed, that would be able to prescribe laws both to France and Spain, instead of receiving laws from them. The present aspect of affairs in Europe is, it is true, dismal enough; but yet it is not yet so dismal as it was in the beginning of the year 1702; and every one knows the glorious success of the confederacy that was then formed against France and Spain. But before we can expect any success either in war, or in forming confederacies, we must take care to unite our people amongst themselves, and to establish among them a confidence in the conduct of those that govern them; which, I am afraid, cannot be done by those who have spread disunion and distrust, not only amongst our allies abroad, but amongst our people at home.

Our trade with Spain, my lords, was once a profitable trade to this nation: but, as France has lately got much into that trade, it is not near so profitable to us as it was. If it were not for our plantations, I believe we should be no great gainers upon the balance. We shall manage the war but ill, if we do not make more by a war with Spain, than we can do by a precarious and interrupted trade. But if it were otherwise, we cannot preserve our trade with that nation, or with any nation, but by preserving their esteem and their friendship; and these we must lose, if we submit tamely to their insults. These walls, my lords, ought to put us in mind of the methods by which our ancestors preserved the trade, and vindicated the honour of the nation. These show it was not by negotiation, nor by lumping away the just demands of their country. I do not know, if there are any historical looms now at work, but I am afraid our Spithead and Carthage expeditions would make as bad a figure in a piece of tapestry, as they will hereafter do in our histories.

But I hope, my lords, we have no such looms at work: it would be for the honour of the nation, if no memorandum could be preserved of some of our past transactions; for we must alter our measures, before we can transmit to posterity what they can reflect on with satisfaction or emulation. If we had taken ex-

ample from the conduct of a minister in a neighbouring country, our affairs, both at home and abroad, would have been in a very different situation : by encouraging trade and manufactures, by parsimony in public expense, by not engaging needlessly in any broils, and by vindicating the honour of his country with resolution, when there was occasion, he has rendered his country happy, and himself glorious. But we have followed contrary measures, and by so doing, have brought ourselves into that distress, which is now made the chief argument for our agreeing to this inglorious convention.

However, my lords, I think the state of our affairs not yet so desperate as that it ought to be a prevailing argument upon this occasion. I hope I have shown, that the state of affairs in Europe, is not so bad as it has been represented ; and as to our domestic affairs, can they improve by submitting to daily insults, and to usurpations that must destroy our trade ? In such circumstances, can we pay off our debts, can we preserve our sinking fund ? No, my lords, by the decay of our trade, our people must every day become poorer, and less numerous : this will diminish our consumption ; and this again will of course diminish the annual produce of our taxes : we may, by a more rigorous collection, keep it up to its old value for some years ; but it will soon begin to sink considerably every year ; and this will at last annihilate our sinking fund. We cannot therefore propose to pay off our debt, unless we preserve our trade : nor can we pay any debt, if in time of peace we must be at the expense of war, which was our case last summer, and may probably be so for many summers to come ; for if great armaments and military preparations were necessary to procure a preliminary convention, surely they will be as necessary for procuring a definitive treaty ; therefore we must have a numerous army at land, and formidable squadrons, I mean in show, my lords, at sea, till this treaty be concluded and ratified, which I am convinced will not be very speedily. In the mean time, as we have stipulated no suspension, our merchants will be plundered, and our seamen cruelly used by the Spanish guarda costas ; which will of course render our people more and more discontented,

and at last disaffected. Our people, it is true, may become more united ; but it will be against our established government ; and in that case, I hope, it will be allowed, that our domestic affairs would be in a worse condition than they are at present, and our government less able to carry on a foreign war, than our present government can be supposed to be.

Our domestic affairs may therefore, my lords, grow worse, but they cannot grow better, by our continuing in such a warlike peace as we have continued in for almost these twenty years ; and we can expect no other sort of peace, till we retrieve our character, and establish our security, which, I think, can now be done no other way but by a vigorous and well-conducted war. But suppose, my lords, the state of affairs, both at home and abroad, were as dismal as it has been represented by those who have spoke in favour of this convention ; could this be any reason for our suing for, or agreeing to such a treaty ? We were in no danger of being attacked by Spain ; we were not so much as threatened by any such attack ; we wanted only satisfaction and reparation for past injuries, and security against future ; therefore we had no shadow of reason for agreeing to any treaty, that did not give us either the one or the other. By this we have obtained neither : we have absolutely released and given up the former ; and we have rendered the latter more precarious than it was before. If we had made no treaty, no preliminary, Spain could only have continued to seize and confiscate such of our merchant-ships as they could meet with and overcome ; and this they may still do, notwithstanding this treaty. What would have been the consequence ? Suppose the nation at present absolutely unable to vindicate its rights or its honour by force of arms, yet we might have waited with patience till an opportunity offered, without being exposed to suffer, in the mean time, more than we are now exposed to, notwithstanding this treaty ; and when an opportunity offered for vindicating our rights and our honour by force of arms, we could then have insisted upon full reparation for all losses, all damage, all expense, which we cannot now do ; because, by this treaty, we have given a general release.

I shall agree, my lords, that this nation can never long want an opportunity for revenge against any nation in Europe. This is our happiness ; but this ought to have been an argument against our granting such a generous release as we have granted by this preliminary. Besides, my lords, it is an argument some people ought to be ashamed to mention, if they could be ashamed of any thing. It is almost twenty years since Spain set up every claim against us they now pretend to ; it is almost twenty years since they have been in a continued and uninterrupted course of insulting the nation, plundering our merchants, and maltreating our seamen ; and it is strange, that in so long a time, we could find no opportunity for revenge, against a nation, which no man will say is by itself an equal match for this. My lords, we have had many opportunities ; but we have neglected them all, or have been prevailed on by French counsels, or worse, to make use of none of them. We had one about seven years since, which it is amazing we neglected ; and the fatal consequences of that neglect now begin to appear ; but I am afraid they do not yet all appear : if they are not prevented by a change of measures in this kingdom, they may prove fatal to Europe as well as to England ; and they cannot be prevented without an infinite expense to this nation, for which those who gave rise to them, ought, I hope they will, be made to answer.

This shows, my lords, that we ought not to have been so ready, I shall not say rash, in approving of treaties or negotiations, as we have been for several years past. We ought to approve of no treaty, without maturely considering its terms and its consequences, as also the necessity there was for agreeing to it ; for as every treaty is a new national obligation, no treaty ought to be agreed to, without some necessity for so doing. And I am convinced that no man who maturely considers the treaty now before us, either in its terms, its consequences, or the necessity there was for our agreeing to it, will approve of it in any shape. An immediate war is not the necessary consequence of our refusing to approve of it, by putting a negative upon this motion. His majesty may, nevertheless, wait for a

more proper opportunity of declaring war. But if we should, in any shape, approve of this treaty, the demands which we may justly make, and fully obtain, in case of a successful war, will thereby be greatly diminished; therefore, the motion which the noble lord has been pleased to make, will, I hope, be disagreed to.

APPENDIX E.

Sir Robert Walpole's Speech in answer to Mr. Sandy's motion for his removal.

[The former part of this Speech is given in the text, p. 290; the remainder is subjoined here.]

“ I SHALL now consider the articles of accusation which they have brought against me, and which they have not thought fit to reduce to specific charges; and I shall consider these in the same order as that in which they were placed by the honourable member who made the motion. First, in regard to foreign affairs; secondly, to domestic affairs; and, thirdly, to the conduct of the war.

“ As to foreign affairs, I must take notice of the uncandid manner in which the gentlemen on the other side have managed the question, by blending numerous treaties and complicated negotiations into one general mass.

“ To form a fair and candid judgment of the subject, it becomes necessary not to consider the treaties merely insulated; but to advert to the time in which they were made, to the circumstances and situation of Europe when they were made, to the peculiar situation in which I stand, and to the power which I possessed. I am called repeatedly and insidiously prime and sole minister.

Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that I am prime and sole minister in this country ; am I therefore prime and sole minister of all Europe ? Am I answerable for the conduct of other countries as well as for that of my own ? Many words are not wanting to show, that the particular views of each court occasioned the dangers which affected the public tranquillity ; yet the whole is charged to my account. Nor is this sufficient ; whatever was the conduct of England, I am equally arraigned. If we maintained ourselves in peace, and took no share in foreign transactions, we are reproached for tameness and pusillanimity. If, on the contrary, we interfered in the disputes, we are called Don Quixotes, and dupes to all the world. If we contracted guarantees, it was asked, why is the nation wantonly burdened ? If guarantees were declined, we were reproached with having no allies."

After making these preliminary observations, on the necessity of considering the relative situation of Europe, when these engagements were contracted, and proving that the treaties were right at the time they were made, though they might not have had the desired effect, he entered into a luminous recapitulation of the principal compacts, which had been adverted to in the course of the debate. They formed a connective series, embracing past events, present advantages, and future contingencies, of which the various parts had such a necessary dependance on each other, that any separation must be fatal to the comprehension of the whole.

He took up the subject from the peace of Utrecht, which, by suffering a prince of the house of Bourbon to remain on the throne of Spain, had materially altered the balance of power in Europe, had produced new interests, and involved this country in a series of delicate and complicated negotiations. The quadruple alliance was the consequence of that treaty : but as he was not then in administration, he was not accountable either for its articles or effects, though he was unfortunately minister, and unwillingly accessory to the execution of it.

He should, therefore, begin with the first act of that administration to which he had the honour to belong ; a refusal to accept of the sole mediation offered by Spain, on the breach be-

tween Spain and France, occasioned by the dismissal of the infanta. "I hope it will not be said," he observed, "we had any reason to quarrel with France upon that account; and therefore, if our accepting of that mediation might have produced a rupture with France, it was not our duty to interfere, unless we had something very beneficial to expect from the acceptance. A reconciliation between the courts of Vienna and Madrid, it is true, was desirable to all Europe, as well as to us, provided it had been brought about without any design to disturb our tranquillity, or the tranquillity of Europe; but both parties were then so high in their demands, that we could hope for no success; and if the negotiation had ended without effect, we might have expected the common fate of arbitrators, the disobliging of both. Therefore, as it was our interest to keep well with both, I must still think it was the most prudent part we could act, to refuse the offered mediation.

"The next step of our foreign conduct, exposed to reprehension, is the treaty of Hanover. Sir, if I were to give the true history of that treaty, which no gentleman can desire I should, I am sure I could fully justify my own conduct; but as I do not desire to justify my own, without justifying his late majesty's conduct, I must observe, that his late majesty had such information, as convinced not only him, but those of his council, both at home and abroad, that some dangerous designs had been formed between the emperor and Spain, at the time of their concluding the treaty at Vienna, in May, 1725. Designs, sir, which were dangerous not only to the liberties of this nation, but to the liberties of Europe. They were not only to wrest Gibraltar and Port Mahon from this nation, and force the pretender on us, but they were to have Don Carlos married to the emperor's eldest daughter, who would thereby have had a probability of uniting in his person, or in the person of some of his successors, the crowns of France and Spain, with the imperial dignity, and the Austrian dominions. It was therefore highly reasonable, both in France and us, to take the alarm at such designs, and to think betimes of preventing their being carried into execution. But with regard to us, it was more particularly our business to take the alarm, because we were to have been immediately

attacked. I shall grant, sir, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for Spain and the emperor joined together to have invaded, or made themselves masters of any of the British dominions; but will it be said, they might not have invaded the king's dominions in Germany, in order to force him to a compliance with what they desired of him, as king of Great Britain? And if those dominions had been invaded on account of a quarrel with this nation, should we not have been obliged, both in honour and interest, to defend them? When we were thus threatened, it was therefore absolutely necessary for us to make an alliance with France; and that we might not trust too much to their assistance, it was likewise necessary to form alliances with the northern powers, and with some of the princes in Germany, which we never did, nor ever could do, without granting them immediate subsidies. These measures were therefore, I still think, not only prudent but necessary, and by these measures we made it much more dangerous for the emperor and Spain to attack us, than it would otherwise have been.

“ But still, sir, though by these alliances we put ourselves upon an equal footing with our enemies, in case of an attack, yet, in order to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, as well as our own, there was something else to be done. We knew that war could not be begun and carried on without money; we knew that the emperor had no money for that purpose, without receiving large remittances from Spain; and we knew that Spain could make no such remittances without receiving large returns of treasure from the West Indies. The only way, therefore, to render these two powers incapable of disturbing the tranquillity of Europe, was by sending a squadron to the West Indies, to stop the return of the Spanish galleons; and this made it necessary, at the same time, to send a squadron to the Mediterranean, for the security of our valuable possessions in that part of the world. By these measures the emperor saw the impossibility of attacking us in any part of the world, because Spain could give him no assistance, either in money or troops; and the attack made by the Spaniards upon Gibraltar was so feeble, that we had no occasion to call upon our allies for assistance: a small squadron of our own prevented their attacking it by sea, and from their attack by land

we had nothing to fear ; they might have knocked their brains out against inaccessible rocks, to this very day, without bringing that fortress into any danger.

“ I do not pretend, sir, to be a great master of foreign affairs. In that post in which I have the honour to serve his majesty, it is not my business to interfere ; and as one of his majesty’s council, I have but one voice ; but if I had been the sole adviser of the treaty of Hanover, and of all the measures which were taken in pursuance of it, from what I have said, I hope it will appear, that I do not deserve to be censured, either as a weak or a wicked minister, on that account.”

The next measures which incurred censure were the guarantee of the pragmatic sanction by the second treaty of Vienna, and the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, in conformity with the articles of that guarantee.

“ As to the guarantee of the pragmatic sanction,” he said, “ I am really surprised to find that measure objected to ; it was so universally approved of, both within doors and without, that till this very day I think no fault was ever found with it, unless it was that of being too long delayed. If it was so necessary for supporting the balance of power in Europe, as has been insisted on in this debate, to preserve entire the dominions of the house of Austria, surely it was not our business to insist upon a partition of them in favour of any of the princes of the empire. But if we had, could we have expected that the house of Austria would have agreed to any such partition, even for the acquisition of our guarantee ? The King of Prussia had, it is true, a claim upon some lordships in Silesia ; but that claim was absolutely denied by the court of Vienna, and was not at that time so much insisted on by the late king of Prussia. Nay, if he had lived till this time, I believe it would not now have been insisted on ; for he acceded to that guarantee without any reservation of that claim ; therefore, I must look upon this as an objection, which has since arisen from an accident, that could not then be foreseen, or provided against.

“ I must therefore think, sir, that our guarantee of the pragmatic sanction, or our manner of doing it, cannot now be ob-

jected to, nor any person censured by parliament for advising that measure. In regard to the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, though it was prudent and right in us to enter into that guarantee, we were not, therefore, obliged to enter into every broil the house of Austria might afterwards lead themselves into; and therefore, we were not in honour obliged to take any share in the war which the emperor brought upon himself in the year 1733, nor were we in interest obliged to take a share in that war, as long as neither sides attempted to push their conquests further than was consistent with the balance of power in Europe, which was a case that did not happen. For the power of the house of Austria was not diminished by the event of that war, because they got Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, in lieu of Naples and Sicily; nor was the power of France much increased, because Loraine was a province she had taken and kept possession of, during every war in which she had been engaged.

“As to the disputes with Spain, they had not then reached such a height, as to make it necessary for us to come to an open rupture. We had then reason to hope, that all differences would be accommodated in an amicable manner; and whilst we have any such hopes, it can never be prudent for us to engage ourselves in war, especially with Spain, where we have always had a very beneficial commerce. These hopes, it is true, sir, at last proved abortive, but I never heard it was a crime to hope for the best. This sort of hope was the cause of the late convention; if Spain had performed her part of that preliminary treaty, I am sure it would not have been wrong in us, to have hoped for a friendly accommodation, and for that end to have waited nine or ten months longer, in which time the plenipotentiaries were, by the treaty, to have adjusted all the differences subsisting between the two nations. But the failure of Spain in performing what had been agreed to by this preliminary, put an end to all our hope, and then, and not till then, it became prudent to enter into hostilities, which were commenced as soon as possible after the expiration of the term limited for the payment of the 95,000*l*.

“ Strong and virulent censures have been cast on me, for having commenced the war without a single ally ; and this deficiency has been ascribed to the multifarious treaties in which I have bewildered myself. But although the authors of this imputation are well apprized that all these treaties have been submitted to and approved by parliament, yet they are now brought forward as crimes, without appealing to the judgment of parliament, and without proving or declaring that all or any of them were advised by me. A supposed sole minister is to be condemned and punished as the author of all ; and what adds to the enormity is, that an attempt was made to convict him uncharged and unheard, without taking into consideration the most arduous crisis which ever occurred in the annals of Europe. Sweden corrupted by France ; Denmark tempted and wavering ; the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel almost gained ; the King of Prussia, the emperor, and the czarina, with whom alliances had been negotiating, dead ; the Austrian dominions claimed by Spain and Bavaria ; the Elector of Saxony hesitating whether he should accede to the general confederacy planned by France ; the court of Vienna irresolute and indecisive. In this critical juncture, if France enters into engagements with Prussia, and if the Queen of Hungary hesitates and listens to France, are all or any of these events to be imputed to English counsels ? and if to English counsels, why are they to be attributed to one man ?

“ I now come, sir, to the second head, the conduct of domestic affairs ; and here a most heinous charge is made, that the nation has been burdened with unnecessary expenses, for the sole purpose of preventing the discharge of our debts, and the abolition of taxes. But this attack is more to the dishonour of the whole cabinet council than to me. If there is any ground for this imputation, it is a charge upon king, lords, and commons, as corrupted, or imposed upon. And they have no proof of these allegations, but affect to substantiate them by common fame and public notoriety.

“ No expense has been incurred but what has been approved of, and provided for by parliament. The public treasure has been duly applied to the uses to which it was appropriated by parlia-

ment, and regular accounts have been annually laid before parliament, of every article of expense. If by foreign accidents, by the disputes of foreign states amongst themselves, or by their designs against us, the nation has often been put to an extraordinary expense, that expense cannot be said to have been unnecessary, because, if by saving it we had exposed the balance of power to danger, or ourselves to an attack, it would have cost, perhaps, a hundred times that sum, before we could recover from that danger, or repel that attack.

“ In all such cases there will be a variety of opinions. I happened to be one of those who thought all these expenses necessary, and I had the good fortune to have the majority of both houses of parliament on my side ; but this, it seems, proceeded from bribery and corruption. Sir, if any one instance had been mentioned, if it had been shown, that I ever offered a reward to any member of either house, or ever threatened to deprive any member of his office or employment, in order to influence his vote in parliament, there might have been some ground for this charge ; but when it is so generally laid, I do not know what I can say to it, unless it be to deny it as generally and as positively as it has been asserted ; and, thank God ! till some proof be offered, I have the laws of the land, as well as the laws of charity, in my favour.

“ Some members of both houses have, it is true, been removed from their employments under the crown ; but were they ever told, either by me, or by any other of his majesty’s servants, that it was for opposing the measures of the administration in parliament ? They were removed, because his majesty did not think fit to continue them longer in his service. His majesty had a right so to do, and I know no one that has a right to ask him, What dost thou ? If his majesty had a mind that the favours of the crown should circulate, would not this of itself be a good reason for removing any of his servants ? Would not this reason be approved of by the whole nation, except those who happen to be the present possessors ? I cannot, therefore, see how this can be imputed as a crime, or how any of the king’s ministers can be blamed for his doing what the public has no concern in :

for if the public be well and faithfully served, it has no business to ask by whom.

“ As to the particular charge urged against me, I mean that of the army debentures, I am surprised, sir to hear any thing relating to this affair charged upon me. Whatever blame may attach to this affair, it must be placed to the account of those that were in power, when I was, as they call it, the country gentleman : it was by them this affair was introduced and conducted, and I came in only to pay off those public securities, which their management had reduced to a great discount, and consequently to redeem our public credit from that reproach, which they had brought upon it. The discount at which these army debentures were negotiated, was a strong and prevalent reason with parliament, to apply the sinking fund first to the payment of those debentures, but the sinking fund could not be applied to that purpose, till it began to produce something considerable, which was not till the year 1727. That the sinking fund was then to receive a great addition, was a fact publicly known in 1726 ; and if some people were sufficiently quicksighted to foresee, that the parliament would probably make this use of it, and cunning enough to make the most of their own foresight, could I help it, or could they be blamed for doing so ? But I defy my most inveterate enemy to prove, that I had any hand in bringing these debentures to a discount, or that I had any share in the profits by buying them up.

“ In reply to those who confidently assert, that the national debt is not decreased since 1727, and that the sinking fund has not been applied to the discharge of the public burdens, I can with truth declare, that a part of the debt has been paid off, and the landed interest has been very much eased, with respect to that most unequal and grievous burden, the land tax. I say so, sir, because upon examination it will appear, that within these sixteen or seventeen years, no less than 8,000,000*l.* of our debt has been actually discharged, by the due application of the sinking fund, and at least 7,000,000*l.* has been taken from that fund, and applied to the ease of the land tax. For if it had not been applied to the current service, we must have supplied

that service by increasing the land tax ; and as the sinking fund was originally designed for paying off our debts, and easing us of our taxes, the application of it in ease of the land tax, was certainly as proper and as necessary an use as could be made. And I little thought that giving relief to landed gentlemen, would have been brought against me as a crime.

“I shall now advert to the third topic of accusation, the conduct of the war. I have already stated in what manner, and under what circumstances hostilities commenced ; and as I am neither general nor admiral, as I have nothing to do either with our navy or army, I am sure I am not answerable for the prosecution of it. But were I to answer for every thing, no fault could, I think, be found with my conduct in the prosecution of the war. It has from the beginning been carried on with as much vigour, and as great care of our trade, as was consistent with our safety at home, and with the circumstances we were in at the beginning of the war. If our attacks upon the enemy were too long delayed, or if they have not been so vigorous or so frequent as they ought to have been, those only are to blame who have for many years been haranguing against standing armies ; for without a sufficient number of regular troops in proportion to the numbers kept up by our neighbours, I am sure we can neither defend ourselves, nor offend our enemies. On the supposed miscarriages of the war, so unfairly stated, and so unjustly imputed to me, I could, with great ease, frame an incontrovertible defence ; but as I have trespassed so long on the time of the house, I shall not weaken the effect of that forcible exculpation so generously and disinterestedly advanced by the right honourable gentleman who so meritoriously presides at the admiralty.

“If my whole administration is to be scrutinised and arraigned, why are the most favourable parts to be omitted ? If facts are to be accumulated on one side, why not on the other ? And why may I not be permitted to speak in my own favour ? Was I not called by the voice of the king and the nation to remedy the fatal effects of the South Sea project, and so support declining credit ? Was I not placed at the head of the treasury,

when the revenues were in the greatest confusion? Is credit revived, and does it now flourish? Is it not at an incredible height, and if so, to whom must that circumstance be attributed? Has not tranquillity been preserved both at home and abroad, notwithstanding a most unreasonable and violent opposition? Has the true interest of the nation been pursued, or has trade flourished? Have gentlemen produced one instance of this exorbitant power, of the influence which I extend to all parts of the nation, of the tyranny with which I oppress those who oppose, and the liberality with which I reward those who support me? But having first invested me with a kind of mock dignity, and styled me a prime minister, they impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority which they only have created and conferred. If they are really persuaded that the army is annually established by me, that I have the sole disposal of posts and honours, that I employ this power in the destruction of liberty, and the diminution of commerce, let me awaken them from their delusion. Let me expose to their view the real condition of the public weal; let me show them that the crown has made no encroachments, that all supplies have been granted by parliament, that all questions have been debated with the same freedom as before the fatal period, in which my counsels are said to have gained the ascendancy: an ascendancy from which they deduce the loss of trade, the approach of slavery, the preponderance of prerogative, and the extension of influence. But I am far from believing that they feel those apprehensions which they so earnestly labour to communicate to others, and I have too high an opinion of their sagacity not to conclude that, even in their own judgment, they are complaining of grievances that they do not suffer, and promoting rather their private interest than that of the public.

“What is this unbounded sole power which is imputed to me? How has it discovered itself, or how has it been proved?”

“What have been the effects of the corruption, ambition, and avarice, with which I am so abundantly charged?”

“Have I ever been suspected of being corrupted? A strange

phenomenon, a corruptor himself not corrupt! Is ambition imputed to me? Why then do I still continue a commoner? I, who refused a white staff and a peerage. I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders, which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But surely, though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this house, where many may be pleased to see those honours which their ancestors have worn, restored again to the commons.

“Have I given any symptoms of an avaricious disposition Have I obtained any grants from the crown since I have been placed at the head of the treasury? Has my conduct been different from that which others in the same station would have followed? Have I acted wrong in giving the place of auditor to my son, and in providing for my own family? I trust that their advancement will not be imputed to me as a crime, unless it shall be proved that I placed them in offices of trust and responsibility for which they were unfit.

“But while I unequivocally deny that I am sole and prime minister, and that to my influence and direction all the measures of government must be attributed, yet I will not shrink from the responsibility which attaches to the post I have the honour to hold; and should, during the long period in which I have sat upon this bench, any one step taken by government be proved to be either disgraceful or disadvantageous to the nation, I am ready to hold myself accountable.

“To conclude, sir, though I shall always be proud of the honour of any trust or confidence from his majesty, yet I shall always be ready to remove from his counsels and presence, when he thinks fit; and therefore I should think myself very little concerned in the event of the present question, if it were not for the encroachment that will thereby be made upon the prerogatives of the crown. But I must think, that an address to his majesty to remove one of his servants, without so much as alleging any particular crime against him, is one of the greatest en-

croachments that was ever made upon the prerogatives of the crown; and therefore, for the sake of my master, without any regard for my own, I hope all those who have a due regard for our constitution, and for the rights and prerogatives of the crown, without which our constitution cannot be preserved, will be against this motion."

Mr. Pulteney's Speech upon the Conduct of the House in the Management of the Affairs of the East India Company. (1742.)

It is not, I think, any way thought that when papers of state are called for by this house, as well as when such papers are laid before us without being called for, it should be with some sort of design. We know very well that when treaties, statutes, or accounts are laid before us without being called for, it is generally with a design to stand a gain of money, or vote of credit, and such demands have of late years usually been complied with. I believe, by most members of the house, without so much as looking at any one of the papers or estimates which were laid before us as the foundation of that demand. This practice, it must be allowed to be a little extraordinary; but our late practice, with regard to these papers, has been extremely different. It has been much more surprising; for the papers called for have been laid before us, they have been ordered to lie upon the table, and then they have generally lain without the least examination, as if we had had no view in calling for them, but that of increasing the bulk of our votes by long lists of letters, instructions, and memorials. Experience has shown that when such papers are ordered to lie upon the table for the perusal of the members, they are seldom perused with attention by any, and when they are perused as partly and indirectly by a few particular members, none of these have authority enough to prevail with the house to enter into a strict inquiry, or to take into consideration the errors, mistakes, or blunders, that may from such papers have discovered.

APPENDIX F.

Mr. Pulteney's Speech upon the Conduct of the War with Spain. (1742.)

Sir,—I have always thought, that when papers of state are called for by this house, as well as when such papers are laid before us without being called for, it should be with some sort of view or design. We know very well that when treaties, estimates, or accounts are laid before us without being called for, it is generally with a design to demand a sum of money, or vote of credit; and such demands have of late years usually been complied with, I believe, by most members of this house, without so much as looking at any one of the papers or estimates which were laid before us as the foundation of that demand. This practice, sir, must be allowed to be a little extraordinary; but our late practice, with regard to those papers that are expressly called for, has been much more surprising; for after the papers called for have been laid before us, they have been ordered to lie upon the table, and there they have generally lain, without the least examination, as if we had had no view in calling for them, but that of increasing the bulk of our votes by long lists of letters, instructions, and memorials. Experience has shown, that when such papers are ordered to lie upon the table for the perusal of the members, they are seldom perused with attention by any, and, when they are perused separately and distinctly by a few particular members, none of them have authority enough to prevail with the house to enter into a strict inquiry, or to take into consideration the errors, mistakes, or blunders, they may from such papers have discovered.

For this reason, sir, and that the nation may see we do not put the administration to the trouble and expense of laying piles of state papers before us, without any view or design, either for the service or satisfaction of the public, I think, when we call for any papers of importance, and they are accordingly laid before us, they ought of course to be referred to a select committee, that they may examine them strictly, and report their remarks, observations, or objections, to the house; for the examination of such a committee must always be more exact and full, and their report will have more weight than the examination or report of any single member who peruses the papers upon our table, without any direction or authority from the house.

When I argue in this manner, sir, I hope no gentleman will think that I am arguing against this or any other administration; for a wise and just administration will always be glad to have its conduct inquired into in the most strict, regular, and authentic method; and if the administration be weak or wicked, it is then the duty of parliament to take that method which is the most regular and the most proper for rescuing the nation out of the hands of such an administration; therefore every gentleman must, with me, suppose one of these two things: either, that the doctrine I have advanced will be approved by those who have the honour of being our present ministers, or, that their opposing it ought to be a prevailing argument with every independent member of this house for agreeing to it; and, consequently, I must look upon it as an established maxim, that all the papers which are laid before this house, and deemed to be of great importance, ought to be referred to the consideration of a select committee.

This, sir, is a maxim which will hold good at all times, and in all circumstances; but when the nation finds itself involved in great difficulties, when our affairs both abroad and at home are apparently in great distress, and when a general suspicion prevails against the conduct of our administration, this maxim ought not only to be approved, but in every instance, without hesitation, pursued; and that this is our case at present I shall endeavour to demonstrate. With regard to our trade and manufactures,

they have been upon the decay for several years; every man is now sensible of this decay, and every man is now convinced that it is owing to the taxes we have upon the necessaries and conveniences of life. By these taxes the subsistence of poor labourers and manufacturers is rendered more expensive in this than in any foreign country, which of course renders it impossible for them to work so cheap, and this must necessarily make our manufactures come dearer to foreign markets than the manufactures of any other country. This has gradually diminished the quantity of our exports to all parts of the world, except to our own plantations, and must, at last, put an entire stop to our exporting any one sort of manufacture; for other nations will by degrees fall into the method of rivalling us in every sort, and as fast as they do, our exports of that sort of manufacture must cease.

We may talk, sir, against the exportation of our wool, and busy ourselves in forming schemes for preventing it; but unless we can, by abolishing many of our taxes, enable our poor to work as cheap as the poor in other countries do, it will be impossible for us to prevent it, any other way than by diminishing our produce; for if we can work up none of our wool, but barely what is necessary for home consumption; and if a greater quantity be produced than what is necessary for this demand, the surplus must be exported, or it must rot upon the hands of the owners, which would render it impossible for many of our farmers to pay their rents; and this might, in a little time, make the cry as loud for the exportation of our wool as it is now against it.

The bad effects of our taxes, and the great decrease in the export of our manufactures were most sensibly felt, sir, before the breaking out of our present war with Spain; but they then began to be more sensibly felt than ever, because that war put an entire stop to our exportation of any manufactures to Spain, and made it more dangerous to export them any where else, which of course enhanced the price, and, consequently, diminished the sale at every other foreign market. This at once threw numbers of our poor labourers and manufacturers out of their usual way of subsisting, and brought them and their

families upon their respective parishes, which has, in many parishes, raised the poor rates to a height never known before in this, nor, I believe, in any other kingdom.

This, sir, is the present desperate state of our trade, and God only knows when, or if ever, we shall recover; but this is far from being the only dire effect of the long continuance of our many heavy taxes. Our people bore with patience the loads they groan under, so long as they had any hopes of seeing our debts paid off, and our taxes abolished; but they have now lost all hopes, and this creates a general uneasiness, which, if not speedily removed, must end in the subversion of our liberties, and, perhaps, the overthrow of our present happy establishment. If this unhappy state had been the necessary consequence of a long and unavoidable war: if by the extraordinary expense we have put ourselves to for twenty years past, the balance of power in Europe had been settled upon a solid foundation; if we had established such a confidence among our allies, and such a respect at all the courts of Europe, as to prevent any one of them from daring to insult or injure us, the people would have had some consolation, and would still have had reason to hope, that, at last, we might have been able to have paid off our debts, and abolished most of our taxes. But can this be said to be the case? We have been engaged in no war: we have had no occasion to put ourselves to any extraordinary expense; for I will venture to say, that if we had not for these twenty years past sent one minister or courier abroad, nor kept one marching regiment of foot at home, the balance of power would have been more secure than it is at present, and we should have been more confided in by our friends, and more dreaded by our enemies, than we are at this time, or have been at any time within that period.

It is something surprising, sir, but it is what the whole nation is now convinced of, that every extraordinary article of expense we have put ourselves to for twenty years past, every negotiation we have entered into, and every treaty we have concluded, has contributed to embroil more and more our affairs, both at home and abroad, and to render the balance of power in Europe more precarious than it was before. By this conduct,

sir, we at last found ourselves involved in an open war with Spain, and threatened and dictated to by France, without one ally to assist us, and without one fund for carrying on the war, except an additional two shillings upon land; for we can no more call the sinking fund a fund for carrying on a war, than we can call the funds appropriated to the payment of the interest growing due to our public creditors a fund for that purpose; because the sinking fund was as solemnly, as legally, and as authentically appropriated to the payment of their principal, as ever the other was to the payment of their interest.

In these circumstances we were, sir, nay, I may say in worse, when the late emperor died; for France, by sending her squadrons to the West Indies, and the manifesto she published upon that occasion, had in some measure openly declared against us; and considering what little success we have had against Spain alone, what success could we have expected against France and Spain united together against us? From this immediate danger we were set free by the accident of the emperor's death; for France then foresaw she might have a better game to play, and was therefore willing to keep fair with this nation for a time; but how were we set free, sir, from this immediate danger? Sir, by the balance of power's being brought into the most imminent, and, in all human probability, the most unavoidable danger; for, in my opinion, nothing less than a miracle has hitherto prevented the utter ruin of the house of Austria, considering the many powers which France has found means to unite against it, and the little assistance it has received from those who were both in honour and interest obliged to support it. This, sir, I say, has for a time prevented our having France avowedly united with Spain in the present war against us. If the emperor had lived, we should probably, before now, have been obliged to submit to such terms of peace with Spain, as France pleased to prescribe, or we should have been now standing single and alone, against the joint force of the two powerful monarchies of France and Spain; for considering how we had deserted the emperor in the year 1733, he would probably have rejoiced at our distress; considering how we have treated the King of Prussia for several years past, he would certainly have refused

to give us any assistance; and the Dutch durst not have ventured to have joined us, without a powerful confederacy in Germany. By good conduct, and the assistance of Providence, we might, perhaps, by ourselves, have been able to have supported such a war, especially if we had by our former economy paid off our debts, and freed our public revenue from mortgage. We might have carried it on with glory, and ended it with honour; but considering what a powerful navy France might have fitted out, if she had no way been obliged to divert her strength by a land war, and considering how we should have been obliged to divide our naval force, for the protection of our trade in every part of the world, and for the defence of our dominions in the Mediterranean and in America, as well as at home, it must be allowed that such a war, supposing the best conduct on our side, would have been extremely heavy and dangerous; and if it had been left to the management of those, who have hitherto managed with so little success our war against Spain alone, we should certainly, before this time, have been undone.

From hence we may see, sir, that though the emperor's death, at the time it happened, was unlucky for Europe, and may at last prove unlucky for this nation, yet it suspended, or put off for a time, the imminent danger we were then exposed to; but are we now free from this danger? Does not every man of common penetration foresee, that if France be allowed to settle the affairs of Germany to her own liking, this danger will recur upon us with redoubled force? She may then dictate to most of the other states of Europe; she may compel those that formerly would have remained neuter, to join with Spain and her against us; and thus, unless we submit to whatever France shall please to prescribe, we shall have not only France but most of the states of Europe united with Spain in a war against us. Such a war it would be impossible for us to support. We should then have no alternative; we must submit; and in such a case who can tell what sort of a submission France might require?

This, sir, is a most disagreeable, a most melancholy prospect, and it becomes the more so when we consider, that in the present distressed condition of this nation, and confused state

of Europe, it is hardly possible to prevent the danger, or to disperse the cloud that hangs over us; for unless we can break that confederacy which France has, by our blunders, found means to form against the Queen of Hungary, I am afraid it will be impossible for us to form any counter confederacy; and considering the present load of debt we groan under, and the general uneasiness thereby occasioned, it will be impossible for us to afford such a powerful assistance to the Queen of Hungary as may enable her to make head against such a mighty confederacy. Thus, sir, I hope I have demonstrated, that at present we labour under great difficulties, and that our affairs are in the utmost distress both abroad and at home. This of itself is sufficient for raising a general suspicion against the conduct of our ministers. From the many expensive negotiations we have of late years carried on: from the many expensive and unprofitable treaties we have concluded; from the vast expense we have put ourselves to, for giving weight to those negotiations, or for enforcing the observance of those treaties, the people of this nation expected that the liberties of Europe would have been by this time secured, beyond a possibility of being attacked, and the trade and navigation of this kingdom secured beyond a possibility of being interrupted; and, consequently, that from this time we might have disbanded our armies, laid up our squadrons, dismissed our foreign auxiliaries, and applied ourselves sincerely and effectually to the paying off our debts, and abolishing our taxes. This, I say, the people expected: this they had reason to expect; and now, when they find themselves disappointed in every one of these particulars, they cannot but suspect, they do most generally, and most violently suspect, both the wisdom and integrity of those who, for so many years, have had the direction of our public affairs, and who have never been refused any sum they thought necessary for securing the success of their measures.

The difficulties we labour under, the distresses we are drove to, and the danger to which the liberties of Europe, and consequently the liberties of this nation, now lie exposed, may be owing to causes of a different nature. They may be owing, sir, to the folly or ambition of foreign courts, or to events that could

not be foreseen or provided against. It may appear that our ministers have done all that human wisdom could direct for preventing these fatal effects; but the present face of affairs, both at home and abroad, affords such a strong presumption against them, that it is become the duty of parliament to make an inquiry into their conduct. If they are conscious of no neglect, weakness, or crime, they will promote that inquiry, they will assist us in every step that is necessary for making that inquiry satisfactory to the nation. If they behave otherwise, it will add strength to the presumption against them, and consequently ought to make us more zealous in performing our duty to our country.

Thus, sir, if at all times it ought to be looked on as a maxim that all such papers of moment as are laid before this house, ought to be referred to a select committee, this maxim ought, in our present circumstances, to be most religiously observed, and, therefore, I shall conclude with moving, "That the several papers presented to this house on Monday last, and likewise the several papers presented to the house yesterday, by Mr. Comptroller, be referred to a select committee; and that they do examine the same, and report to the house what they find material in them."

APPENDIX G.

Mr. Henry Pelham's Answer to the preceding Speech.

Sir,—If a parliamentary inquiry into our past conduct could be carried on without any interruption or prejudice to our future, no man should be more ready than I to agree to it; no man should be more zealous in promoting it; because I am convinced it would terminate in a full justification of those lately concerned in our administration, against all the aspersions and calumnies that have been cast upon their conduct. But a parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of ministers always has been, and always must be attended with great warmth; for the most innocent minister will always have a party in parliament zealous to condemn, and the most guilty will generally have a party zealous to acquit. This of course raises a warmth within doors; and this warmth within doors will always occasion heats and animosities without, which may rise to such a height as to break out in a civil war. Of this we had such a late instance, that it can escape the notice of no gentleman in this house. I believe few gentlemen will now pretend to justify the conduct of those who were our ministers during the last four years of Queen Anne: I believe most gentlemen are now convinced, they were guilty of very high crimes and misdemeanors; and yet, we all know, a parliamentary inquiry into their conduct was the occasion of a civil war in the kingdom, which might have been fatal to us, if we had at that

time been engaged in a foreign war, or if Europe had been in such a situation as it is in at present.

I had then, sir, the honour to be a member of this house, and I was zealous for the inquiry then set on foot, because I thought the ministers guilty, and because I thought we had then an opportunity to inquire into their conduct, without exposing the nation to any foreign danger. But forasmuch as I was convinced of the misconduct of those ministers, if the nation had been at that time involved in a dangerous foreign war, or if the liberties of Europe had been as much in danger as they are at present, I should have been for suspending our resentment against the guilty, till we had fully provided for the safety of the innocent; and the event showed that this sort of conduct would have been the most prudent.

This ought always, in my opinion, to be a rule for our conduct, even when we are convinced that ministers are criminal, or have been guilty of some piece of misconduct. How much more ought it to be a rule for our conduct, when we are convinced of their innocence, or have but a bare suspicion of their guilt? When a parliamentary inquiry is set up, innocence may be a safeguard, but it is far from being a safeguard in which a minister can securely and quietly put his trust. He must not sit with his arms across, and trust to the honesty of his prosecutors, and impartiality of his judges. He must be watchful that no false evidence shall be brought or given against him, and diligent and expeditious in detecting and exposing it when it is. He must take care to make his innocence appear in every instance where it is attacked, and for this purpose he may very probably be obliged to discover secrets, which may be of great prejudice to the nation. At the same time, he must in every step be watchful, lest any point should be carried against him by a factious cabal; and for this purpose he must diligently and earnestly solicit the attendance of all his friends. These considerations, sir, must show, that, during such an inquiry, no administration can have leisure to mind the public business as they ought; and besides, the necessity ministers are in such cases reduced to, of divulging the secrets of government, in order to justify their conduct, may be of infinite and irreparable

prejudice to the public; therefore, I think, we ought to lay it down as a rule for our conduct, never to consent to a parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of an administration, unless we be convinced, that some of those concerned have been guilty of very great crimes or misdemeanors.

A common rumour, or a bare suspicion, however general, can be no sufficient ground for setting up such an inquiry; because such rumours and suspicions are spread against the best, as well as against the worst ministers: nay, a good minister is more liable than a bad one to such rumours and suspicions. If he be frugal of the public treasure, and cautious in granting public favours; if he prefers meritorious modesty to clamorous impudence, he must raise to himself a great number of enemies; for every man who is refused any suit, however justly, becomes a secret or declared enemy to the minister, and of course endeavours to propagate calumnies against him; and the misfortune is, that the most impudent and clamorous are generally most listened to by the unthinking part of mankind. Though this be by far the most numerous part of mankind, yet, I hope there are none of them in this house, and therefore, whatever rumours or suspicions may be spread without doors, I hope they will not be listened to here, unless they appear to be founded upon indisputable facts, or very strong presumptions.

As to facts, sir, notwithstanding the many rumours that are spread without doors, I have never yet heard a proof offered of any one criminal fact against those concerned in our administration; and as to the presumptions that have been suggested, I do not think there is the least foundation for any one of them. That this nation labours under great difficulties, and that the present posture of affairs, both at home or abroad, is far from being agreeable, I shall readily grant; but to every one who, with candour, examines the history of this nation, and of Europe, for twenty years past, it must appear evident, that neither of these misfortunes can justly be imputed to any design or misconduct in our ministers. Our debts were all contracted long before the present administration had a being. At least, if any new debt has been contracted, a much greater old one has been paid off; for when our present ministers first came

into power, the national debt was larger than it is at present; and what was worse, our public credit, by an ill-managed project, was almost entirely sunk. They, by their wisdom and good management, soon restored the public credit of the nation; and they have since paid off as much of the public debt as it was possible, without loading the people with some new or additional taxes.

If we had kept up no army,—if we had kept up no navy,—if we had been put to no expense by the ambitious projects of foreign princes, I shall admit, sir, that a much larger share of our public debt might have been paid off, and, perhaps, many of our heavy taxes abolished. But will any one say, that at any time for these twenty years past, it would have been prudent or safe to disband our army? Will any one say, that we ought to have left our navy to rot and fall to decay? Will any one say, now that we so sensibly feel a want of seamen, that we ought not always to keep a large number of seamen in pay? Will any one say, that when we were threatened with an attack, we ought not to have provided for our defence? By so doing, sir, we have always prevented the attack, and thereby preserved our domestic tranquillity for these twenty years past; and surely it will be allowed, that it is both safer and cheaper to prevent than to repel an invasion.

Therefore, sir, if a greater share of our public debt has not been paid off; if none of our heavy taxes have been abolished, it is not owing to any mismanagement in our ministers, but to the public necessities, which annually required a larger expense than had been foreseen. If our ministers had taken upon them to be sole judges of those necessities, there might have been some pretence for finding fault with their conduct; but they have regularly laid these necessities before the parliament, and have never put the nation to one shilling expense, but what has been previously authorized, or afterwards approved of by a majority in both houses; therefore an inquiry into their conduct upon this head, may properly be called an inquiry into the conduct of parliament; and if you should give sentence against the former, it will be a condemnation of the latter,

which, with regard to the respect due to parliament, may have a very bad effect upon all degrees of men in this kingdom.

Now, sir, with regard to the present posture of affairs at home and abroad, I shall grant it is a misfortune to this nation, to be involved in a war with Spain: I shall grant it is a misfortune to Europe, to have so many of its princes united for destroying that balance of power upon which their own independency, at least the independency of all of them but one, most absolutely depends. But can either of these misfortunes be imputed to any misconduct in our ministers? Our being involved in a war with Spain, is owing to nothing but the pride, haughtiness, and obstinacy of that nation. Did our ministers advise his majesty to declare war against Spain without a cause? Did they precipitate the nation into that war, without having first tried every method for obtaining satisfaction by peaceable means? We all know that their backwardness in commencing hostilities was exclaimed against by many in this nation, and even by those who now endeavour to load them with the misfortune of our being involved in war. Thus, sir, if ministers pursue pacific measures, their conduct is found fault with; and if they pursue warlike measures, their conduct is found fault with; if they provide for our defence at home, and thereby prevent an attack, their conduct is found fault with, on account of the expense; and if, by their neglecting to provide for our defence, the nation should be invaded, their conduct would certainly, and, I am sure, with more reason, be found fault with. This, sir, makes me think, it is not so much their conduct, as their continuing to be our ministers, that is the real ground of complaint: and this will be a ground of complaint against all future, as well as against our present ministers; for no man that serves the crown will give up his employment, as long as the king inclines he should keep it, and desires nothing of him inconsistent with his honour or the good of his country, which, it is well known, his present majesty will never desire of any man that serves him; and this, perhaps, makes gentlemen so fond of getting into employment; but it is, in my opinion, an ungrateful return in gentlemen, to

endeavour to distress his majesty's affairs, in order to force themselves into his service.

Thus, sir, I think, it must appear, that no one who has the honour of having a share in his majesty's councils, can be blamed for the misfortune of our being involved in a war with Spain, and as little can they be blamed for the present unhappy state of affairs in Europe, which is entirely owing to one of these two causes : either to a fatal, I may say, frantic ambition, in some of the princes of Germany, who, rather than not extend their dominions, seem resolved to render themselves dependent upon the crown of France ; or it is owing to an unaccountable obstinacy in the court of Vienna, who, rather than do justice to their neighbouring princes in Germany, seem resolved to bring themselves, and the whole German empire, into a sort of subjection to his most Christian majesty. Which of these two causes the present misfortune of Europe is owing to, I shall not pretend to determine ; but let it be which it will, our ministers cannot be blamed. It was not, it cannot be supposed to have been in their power to govern the ambition of the princes of Germany, or to overcome the obstinacy of the court of Vienna.

I hope I have now shown, sir, that neither the difficulties we labour under, nor the present dangerous situation of affairs, can afford any presumption of misconduct in those, who for some time past, have had the honour of being in his majesty's councils ; and as no particular crime has yet been charged against them, nor the least proof offered of any fact, if there are any suspicions without doors, those suspicions can have no solid foundation, and ought not therefore to have such weight within doors, as to lead us into a parliamentary inquiry, which is always troublesome, and, at this juncture, would be extremely dangerous. If this nation be in distress, if the affairs of Europe be in distress, as they certainly are, it should be an argument with us to avoid all personal altercations and animosities, and to unite heartily among ourselves, both in council and action, for retrieving affairs both abroad and at home. The case of this nation, the case of Europe, is not yet, thank God ! so desperate, but that both may be restored, if proper

remedies be speedily applied. Our public credit is yet in a flourishing condition ; we may yet raise large sums for the support of a necessary war ; and if the tranquillity of Europe be restored, and established upon a solid foundation, we may soon pay off old arrears, as well as what we may be obliged to contract for that salutary purpose. The confederacy formed against the Queen of Hungary is so unnatural, that it must of itself be dissolved, unless the princes of Germany be kept firm to France, by seeing it impossible or dangerous to break from her. This may be prevented, if we immediately unite amongst ourselves, and interpose with the whole strength of the British nation ; but if, like ignorant and contentious physicians, we sit accusing one another of malpractice, the patient may expire in the interim.

I must, therefore, conjure gentlemen to give over all personal animosities, and think of nothing but giving his majesty that advice, and those aids, which may be thought proper and necessary for providing against the calamity that threatens us. If any thing has been done amiss, we may soon find a proper time for inquiring into it, but the present is far from being so ; and if no immediate inquiry be designed, we have no occasion for referring any papers to the consideration of a select committee ; for I cannot agree with my honourable friend in thinking, that every important paper, or parcel of papers, that are, or may be laid before the house, should be referred to a select committee. If this were laid down as a rule for our conduct, we should have time to do nothing, but to hear and consider the reports from such committees. It would therefore be impossible to observe the rule, and it has never been the practice. When gentlemen's curiosity prompts them to desire a sight of any papers of state, they move for having them laid before the house, and their motion is always complied with, when consistent with the public safety. When the papers thus called for are laid upon the table, they examine them : if they find nothing material, their whole design is answered ; but if they find any thing they think worth the notice of the house, they acquaint the house with what they have observed, and if a majority be of the same opinion, the house either enters into

the immediate consideration thereof, which they may easily do, because the papers are upon the table; or refer the whole to the consideration of a committee, perhaps a select committee.

This, sir, is the usual method of proceeding in such cases; and as no observations have been made upon any of the papers referred to in this motion, nor any one fact mentioned from them for inducing us to take any of them into our consideration, I must suppose, that those gentlemen who have perused them, for I confess I have not, have found nothing in them they think worth the notice of the house; and if they have not, I can see no reason why we should give any committee the trouble to peruse and examine them.

But, besides seeing no reason for referring these papers to a select committee, there are, I think, strong reasons against it. If this motion should be complied with, it will immediately spread an opinion abroad, that instead of taking proper measures for the time to come, we are going to enter upon an inquiry into past measures; this will certainly raise divisions amongst us, and may produce a civil war in the kingdom, or at least a breach between his majesty and his parliament, which will of course disable us from giving our friends abroad any assistance, or interposing any manner of way in the affairs of Europe; and the consequence of such an opinion being spread abroad, may be most fatal. The princes now united in an alliance with France, will then see it impossible to break off from that alliance; the other princes and states of Europe will see it impossible to form any confederacy, capable of giving a check to the designs of France: the Queen of Hungary, despairing of any relief or assistance, will immediately submit to such terms as France shall please to prescribe; and the court of France, being free from the fear of control, will set no bounds to their ambition. Suppose their present chief minister should be moderate in his views; suppose he has no other intention than to reduce the power of the house of Austria, without adding to the power of the house of Bourbon, yet in such a case, it would be impossible for him to stem the torrent of French ambition, or to govern a court where that passion has always so much prevailed.

The spreading such an opinion abroad is, therefore, sir, what we ought most carefully to prevent; but if this motion should be agreed to, it would be impossible to prevent a most strict inquiry, and a most violent prosecution being set on foot. There are many gentlemen, I hope, both within doors and without, of a moderate disposition, and such as have a greater regard for the safety of the public than for any personal resentment. Those gentlemen may, as yet, be able to govern and moderate the temper of the nation, or, at least, of this house; but if a select committee were once named, I am afraid it would be out of their power. That committee would think it incumbent upon them to do something. The papers now proposed to be referred to them, would give them an inclination to see others, and those again would make them think it necessary to see more, till they had got all the state papers, even the most secret, before them; and in order to succeed in all their motions for this purpose, and to have their report approved of, they would endeavour to raise, and would probably succeed in raising, a most violent and revengeful spirit, both without doors and within, which might fall heavy upon some innocent men, as well as upon the guilty. The former, his majesty would certainly, from his known justice and resolution, endeavour to protect; and what might be the consequence of such a contest, God only knows.

Thus, sir, as I can see no reason for this motion; as I think it would be attended with the most dangerous, the most fatal consequences, I must therefore be against it, and hope the honourable gentlemen will not insist upon their motion; for even their insisting upon it may have a very bad effect upon his majesty's negotiations abroad.

END OF VOL. II.



Cooke, George Wingrove

The history of party from the rise of the Whig and Tory factions, in the
reign of Charles II. to the passing of the reform bill

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